

**Institute of Education  
University of London**

**Doctor in Education  
Thesis**

**In Search of Inclusive and Effective Pedagogy:  
Implementing the National Early Childhood  
Education Curriculum in Chile**

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## **Abstract**

Chile launched in 2002 the nation-wide implementation of the early childhood education curriculum designed for children 0 to 6 years of age. The curriculum provides a flexible reference framework centred on expected learning outcomes. This research aims to analyse how Chilean educators are experiencing the new curriculum and how their classroom practice is meeting the needs of diverse groups of children.

Within the framework of the sociocultural theory of human development and inclusive education, this research examines the curriculum implementation and the use of inclusive and effective pedagogy in three regions of Chile by using mixed methods: application of ECERS-R and ECERS-E, direct classroom observations, a survey of pedagogical supervisors, and semi-structured interviews with classroom educators and national policy-makers.

The research sheds light on educators' experiences, including their high acceptance and appreciation for the new curriculum as well as their struggles with the general statements of expected learning outcomes, large class sizes and short instruction time. It also reveals that the implementation of the curriculum is a process in which educators construct their own knowledge, beliefs and practice by experiencing and participating in their particular sociocultural and historical contexts.

The research findings indicate that the educators need to further broaden their perspective and practice beyond the microsystem of the classroom: by helping children be exposed to and participate in broader sociocultural activities and by broadening their own concept of diversity in the classroom – from learners' individual differences to their sociocultural characteristics. The conclusion of this research is that inclusiveness and effectiveness of pedagogy are two sides of the same coin: when educators interact with children in the way to support their socioculturally diverse learning needs (inclusiveness) and engage them in sustained shared thinking (effectiveness), the learners are constructing their own learning and transforming their participation in sociocultural activities.

**Declaration and Word Length**

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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### **Edd International: The 2000 Word Statement**

When I began my EdD programme in October 2004, I never thought that it would take me over seven years to complete. Although I progressed smoothly through the four modules and the IFS, the thesis process took much longer than expected due, primarily, to the heavy workload of the position I was appointed to after all the data was collected. I had also underestimated the effects of this EdD endeavour on my professional practice and vice versa. Due to the nature of international civil service within the United Nations, my geographic and professional contexts have changed over the years, and it has been a challenge to link my academic work with my evolving professional practice in a precise way. However, my academic work also evolved as described below, and it has challenged and enriched my professional and personal development.

When I applied for the programme, I was working at UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile) as an assistant programme specialist for the regional co-ordination of the Education for All (EFA) programme and the early childhood care and education (ECCE) programme. The EFA programme is a global movement for education, born out of the World Conference on Education for All held in 1990 (Jomtien, Thailand) and reinvigorated at the follow-up World Education Forum held in 2000 (Dakar, Senegal). My original research interest at the time was the assessment of ECCE programme quality and young children's development and learning.

By the time I began the programme, however, I had been transferred to the Executive Office of UNESCO's Education Sector at the Headquarters (Paris) and engaged in the Sector's global strategic planning and programme monitoring. After assuming two subsequent positions within the Headquarters Education Sector, I was appointed in 2008 to the post of the Education Sector's regional programme co-ordinator for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand), and since May 2010 I am also the programme specialist for ECCE due to the prolonged vacancy of the post. This career path has put me in a uniquely oscillating position as a programme specialist in ECCE and a generalist co-ordinator-manager, and this is reflected in my academic enquiry into the global education discourse on the one hand and the national ECCE policy on the other.

My engagement with the first module, Foundations of Professionalism in Education (FoP), was broad and general, deconstructing and reconstructing the concept of professionalism for international civil servants in UNESCO's changing historical and political context. In the module assignment titled 'Deprofessionalisation of International Civil Servants: The Case of UNESCO Education Sector', I argue that similar to the public service professionals of Anglo-American nations, UNESCO Education Sector's international civil servants have been gravely affected in the past decades by the changing ideological pressures from its Member States and the organisational reforms that focussed on 'managerialism' and generic competence, which led to deprofessionalisation and proletarianisation. This exploration reconfirmed for me the importance of continuously pursuing professional development of the two elements that define 'professionalism': specialised technical knowledge and ethical conduct.

The relationship between the FoP and the International Education (IE) modules is particularly strong in the sense that as an international civil servant both made me question the meaning of professionalism and the *raison d'être* of the UNESCO Education Sector (i.e. the co-ordination role of the Education for All commitment). The essay component of the IE assignment ('Globalisation and Equity in Education Policies') allowed me to critically interrogate several theoretical perspectives of the process and effect of the global education discourses, such as education as an investment for national development and education as a human right. I have been exposed to and fascinated by diverse theoretical perspectives, such as the world culture theory, the globalisation research and the capability approach. The literature review on globalisation and education policy-making, with a particular focus placed on the concept of agency, proved useful in explaining the coexistence of the two seemingly contradictory discourses in national education policies (i.e. market-driven and equity-driven). By drawing upon Amartya Sen's capability approach, I argue that the equity-driven policy discourse needs to move beyond legal positivism, based on international conventions, declaration, etc., by working with individual agents and demanding the collective ethical obligations to respect the intrinsic value of human rights and freedoms. This theoretical exploration laid a foundation for the theoretical framework for the Institution-Focused Study.

I used the Method of Enquiry 1 (MoE 1) assignment to start planning my IFS, with the general purpose of examining the extent to which national governments have reflected in their policies related to education in general and ECCE in particular, the commitments made in the Education for All (EFA) declarations. It represented an enquiry into UNESCO's role as global EFA co-ordinator from the perspective of the world culture theory that links the roles played by international organisations and their professionals in influencing the development of national education plans and policies. My Method of Enquiry 2 (MoE 2) assignment had two general objectives: to analyse in depth the two EFA declarations (Jomtien and Dakar) and to make a preliminary enquiry into what key UNESCO professionals understand as an 'EFA discourse' and how they promote and disseminate it. These two MoE assignments were building blocks for the IFS in terms of conducting a literature review and practicing the research methods (content analysis and semi-structured interviews).

Building on the four modules completed, the Institution-Focused Study (IFS) set out to understand the EFA discourse, with special focus on ECCE. It took into account formulation in official EFA documents, the perspectives of UNESCO officials at Headquarters and the Regional Office in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the implementation as reflected in policy documents in Chile and Paraguay. It drew on theoretical literature of such scholars as Michel Foucault, Amartya Sen, Martin Woodhead and Elaine Unterhalter to analyse the competing conceptualisations of childhood from the perspectives of needs, rights and capabilities. The IFS was over-ambitious and too wide in scope, which sacrificed the depth of analysis. Moreover, the comments on both my MoE assignments and IFS indicated that the methods of data collection and analysis, including sampling and piloting of interview questions, were not sufficiently developed. I believe that the research design and methodology are the areas I have improved the most during the thesis process thanks to my supervisor's persistent and thorough advice.



Given the experience of the IFS, I needed to narrow the scope of the research for the thesis. Moreover, I wanted to explore the professional relevance of the thesis beyond the generic and theoretical links between the global EFA discourse and national education policy. My interest thus shifted from the macro-policy level (effects of the global discourse on national policy) to the micro-practice level (effects of national policy on classroom practice). It was then decided, after consultations with my supervisor, to focus on the case of Chile and its national ECCE curriculum launched in 2002, instead of conducting a cross-country comparison between Chile and Paraguay.

At the time, I was posted in the Section of Inclusive and Quality Learning within the Division of Basic Education at UNESCO Headquarters. We were then preparing for the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Conference on Education under the subtitle 'Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future' (Geneva, November 2008). For this reason, I had the urge to research 'inclusive education' practice in ECCE based on UNESCO's comprehensive definition:

a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.

It is crucial to note in this definition that inclusion is not only about access to education; all learners should be given the opportunities to participate in learning and achieve desired outcomes. Moreover, it is not only about inclusion in the school but also in the community and wider society. From this theoretical and ethical perspective, this thesis attempts to identify inclusive and effective pedagogical practice to help all learners participate and learn in the classroom to the ideal expressed in the definition above. At the same time, it is a critical examination of the extent to which the national early childhood education curriculum in Chile is facilitating or challenging educators' classroom practice in meeting the needs of diverse groups of children.

The thesis does not simply compare the educators' stated experiences and their observed classroom practice in three quite distinct regions of Chile. It also compares the perspectives of the national policy-makers, school pedagogical supervisors and the educators with respect to their understanding of diversity in the classroom and the national early childhood education curriculum. Moreover, the theoretical framework of the thesis, drawn from sociocultural theory (Vygotsky and Rogoff) and inclusive education, is enriched by some of the dimensions of multicultural education developed by Banks, in particular the 'equity pedagogy'. This allows teachers to modify their teaching practice to facilitate learners' learning achievement according to the students' learning styles, attributable not only to individual character but also to different cultural groups (gender, race, ethnicity, language, etc.). The thesis thus purposefully selected two regions (in addition to the capital city) with the highest proportions of indigenous populations to take into account this inter-cultural dimension.

The field work for data collection was conducted between my transfer from Headquarters to the Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. It was a rewarding and eye-opening experience to visit preschools in three different regions of Chile because the counterparts for my work at UNESCO tended to be policy-makers at the central level, so before this field work I had only limited contact with officials at the sub-national/provincial levels and classroom teachers at the local level. Since May 2010, I am in a unique position as a generalist manager and ECCE programme specialist for the region of Asia and the Pacific. When I work with policy-makers and researchers now, I am more conscious of what may or may not take place at different levels: the national level policy discourse, the meso-level intermediation of administrators and teacher trainers at the decentralised level and the classroom level practice, as well as the important influence exerted by children's sociocultural contexts (e.g. family, community and institutions).

Through the classroom observations and interactions with educators, I was able to witness their everyday experience and challenges in dealing with the newly introduced curriculum in the context of their classrooms. Obviously, the success of curricular implementation depends not only on the technical soundness of the curriculum or its rollout process (i.e. consultations, teacher trainings, material distribution) but also on the sociocultural contexts of educators as well as learners. While I was impressed by the educators' dedication to their work with children, it was clear that their work was challenged by, for example, the children's sociocultural environment that affects behaviours and learning dispositions.

My personal journey through the EdD programme was not straightforward in the sense that I was going in and out of a specialised field within the education sector due to my evolving career within UNESCO. It was a struggle for me to demonstrate the links between the EdD work related to ECCE curriculum and my professional practice as a generalist-manager. Nevertheless, the EdD work has clearly helped me develop capacity in theoretical and intellectual engagement as well as research methods in education, which can be applied to diverse areas of UNESCO's mandate. Moreover, my learning was progressive and increasingly focussed on inclusive and effective pedagogy in ECCE. For this reason, as I concluded in the FoP assignment, I feel that the EdD experience has helped me deepen my specialised knowledge while reinforcing my holistic and ethical view of international public service.

## 1. Introduction

The national early childhood education curriculum (*Bases Curriculares de la Educación Parvularia*) was introduced in Chile in 2001 and its nation-wide implementation began in 2002 (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001). The curriculum provides a flexible curricular orientation designed for children 0 to 6 years of age as one single educational level, with two learning cycles (based on development stages, roughly 0-3 and 3-6 years of age). The curriculum is based on three areas of learning experiences (personal and social formation, communication, and ones' relation with the natural and cultural environment) and the 'learning nuclei' or general learning objectives for each area. For each learning nucleus, it provides for two separate learning cycles, a number of expected learning outcomes that the child is expected to demonstrate as well as the pedagogical orientations for educators (theories, guidance and possible activities). The emphasis is placed on the role of the child as an active subject of learning, through his or her interaction with the environment (people and other beings, nature, his/her immediate and remote surroundings, etc.) as well as on the respect for the diversity of children and their families (the structure of the curricular bases is presented in the Appendix 1).

Chile's early childhood education is often cited as a success story in the developing world, given its government's continuous efforts to expand the coverage and improve quality. Moreover, Chilean early childhood educators are university graduates, and many early childhood education specialists actively support and advise other countries in Latin America (see basic country information and map in Appendix 2). For example, the 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2006) highlighted Chile's comprehensive early childhood education policies and inclusive practices, and UNESCO invited the Chilean Minister of Education to the highly publicised launching ceremony of the report and the video message of President Michelle Bachelet was shown at the ceremony. Some countries followed Chile as an example: Paraguay's early childhood education curriculum published in 2005, for instance, shows striking resemblance to the Chilean curriculum. Experiences and lessons learnt by Chilean early childhood educators in implementing the national curriculum would be useful for other Latin American countries and beyond.

My initial interest in studying how the Chilean early childhood education curriculum was implemented at the classroom level was based on a mixture of great admiration and slight scepticism for this success story. In fact, as I learned, reports on the curricular implementation published in Chile focussed almost exclusively on the success of its implementation in general and good practices at the classroom level. For this reason, I wanted to talk to early childhood educators in different parts of the country and observe how they were actually implementing the curriculum and whether their approach made the curriculum accessible to children of all backgrounds.

### **1.1 Rationale for the Research**

I undertook this research in my professional capacity as a programme specialist on early childhood care and education and the regional programme co-ordinator for the Education Sector of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which promotes education as a human right and the key to the construction of peace. As the United Nations' specialised agency for education, UNESCO was given the mandate at the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000) to co-ordinate the international community's efforts to achieve Education for All (EFA). At the same time, UNESCO, as an inter-governmental technical agency, is mandated to provide policy advice and technical assistance at the country level. UNESCO's Education Sector increasingly concentrates 'on "upstream" work such as standard setting and policy and planning advice in order to achieve impact with its limited resources', rather than 'downstream' implementation of operational activities at the local level (UNESCO, 2009a, p. 23). It is critical for education programme specialists and co-ordinators to be aware of the processes and results of the implementation of education policies and plans at the local level. For this reason, it was of particular professional relevance and importance for me to study how national policies are implemented at the local level, and particularly, how teachers interpret national policies and recontextualise them for their classroom practice.

The Dakar Framework for Action, adopted at the World Education Forum, re-affirms the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990) that every person –from birth and throughout life– has a human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term. This human rights-based approach is behind the concept and practice of

‘inclusive education’, which after gaining widespread support, was once again focussed upon at the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the International Conference on Education, organised by UNESCO under the subtitle ‘Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future’ (Geneva, November 2008). UNESCO defines inclusive education as:

a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision that covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2009b, pp. 8-9).

Over the last twenty years or so, the concept of inclusive education has evolved towards the idea that all individuals, regardless of their cultural, social and learning backgrounds, should have equivalent learning opportunities in all types of schools (UNESCO, 2008, p. 9). Inclusive education as an approach thus embraces learners’ diversity and seeks to address the learning needs of all individual learners, not just a few individuals with ‘special needs’. Ensuring equal learning opportunities, however, does not mean to provide the same education for all. Education systems and schools must meet the diverse needs of all learners, so that each learner can exercise his/her human right to satisfy his/her learning needs.

Also important in the concept of inclusive education is that while the access to educational opportunities is fundamental, it is equally important that all learners are able to take full part in the educational activities and achieve the desired outcomes. In other words, ensuring access for all is a crucial but merely first step to inclusion; the education systems must ensure that all learners are respected in classrooms and involved in socio-culturally relevant learning experiences, resulting in their successful learning achievement and personal development. This was the reason for focussing my research on the issue of ‘diversity’ across the country as well as within a classroom, in evaluating how the national early childhood education curriculum is implemented to meet diverse needs of children.

According to the Chilean Ministry of Education, the pilot implementation of the early childhood education curriculum proved that all schools were capable of implementing the curriculum, though with different levels of achievement depending on such factors as the degree of understanding and use of the curriculum, the support

provided by school principals and technical teams, the existence of family and community support, the existence of peer support or mentorship for educators and the use of audio-visual instruments for educators for self-analyses and reflections (UNESCO-ORELAC and Chile Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 26). While the Ministry of Education publicised the successful results of the pilot implementation and good practices (Chile Ministry of Education, 2004; Chile Ministry of Education, JUNJI and Fundación INTEGRA, 2005; UNESCO-ORELAC and Chile Ministry of Education, 2004), early childhood educators' perspectives and challenges were not sufficiently documented. The research thus aimed to bring out the perspectives of educators in different parts of the country, with respect to some of the challenges they faced in implementing the curriculum.

## **1.2 Chile: Country Context**

The Political Constitution of the Republic of Chile, approved in 1980, guarantees the right to education as well as the freedom of teaching, understood as the right to open, organise and maintain schools within certain regulations (Chile Ministry of Interior, 1980). The Constitutional Natural Law of Teaching (*Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza*, 1990) sets the ultimate goal of education as 'to reach [an individual's] moral, intellectual, artistic, spiritual and physical development through the transmission and cultivation of values, knowledge and skills, framed within our national identities, which in turn build their capacity to live together and participate in the community in a responsible and active manner' (Chile Ministry of Public Education, 1990, my translation). The same law affirms that parents have the preferential right and duty to educate their children, whereas the State has the duty to provide special protection of this right and the community has the duty to contribute to the development and improvement of education.

The education system of Chile is characterised by its decentralised organisation, in which municipalities, autonomous public institutions or private entities (individual or corporate) assume the responsibility to offer educational services. This decentralised structure was introduced during the military regime (1973-1989), which, in pursuit of political neo-conservatism and neo-liberal economic policies, brought profound changes in the education system and the role of the State in education provision. On the one hand, by decentralising the administration of public education, the management responsibility of the education system was transferred to

the regional and then to provincial governments, and public schools became municipal institutions. On the other hand, privatisation based on the 'freedom of teaching' doctrine allowed private entities to open and manage schools on the State's behalf, receiving per-student subsidies in addition to school fees collected from families.

There are four levels of education in Chile's education system: early childhood education (*educación parvularia*, from birth until the entry to basic education), basic education (*educación básica*, 8 years of duration), secondary education (*educación media*, 4 years of duration) and higher education (*educación superior*). Since 1920 a six-year primary education was compulsory and was extended to the current eight-year length in 1965. In 2003, the secondary education was also made compulsory, resulting in the longest duration of compulsory schooling among Latin American countries (12 years).

Although recognised as the first level of the education system, early childhood education is not compulsory in Chile. In 2004, the Constitutional Natural Law of Teaching was modified to include the duty of the State to promote the development of all education levels, and especially early childhood education. The early childhood education is divided into three levels: Nursery Level (*Sala Cuna*, 0-2 years of age), Middle Level (*Nivel Medio*, 2-4 years of age) and Transition Level (*Nivel de Transición*, 4-6 years of age). All levels are divided into first and second sub-levels. The two sub-levels of the Transition Level (the 4-5 and 5-6 year old age groups) are commonly called *pre-kinder* and *kinder*, respectively, and this is the level on which early childhood education coverage is concentrated. The coverage is concentrated on the *kinder* level but is being expanded at the *pre-kinder* level, as the state subsidies began to be given to the latter group in 2001.

As in the other education levels, early childhood education services can be classified according to the administration (public or private) as well as the source of finance. Municipal preschools are fully funded by the government and do not charge school fees. Subsidised private schools are administered by private entities (e.g. private companies, individuals or churches) but receive state subsidies as well as school fees paid by students' families. Fee-paying private schools, on the other hand, are financed fully with private funding, mostly fees paid by families. In 2007, the pre-primary enrolments were distributed as follows: 42.1% in municipal schools, 46.6%

in subsidised private schools and 11.3% in fee-paying private schools (Chile Ministry of Education, 2010). In addition, unique to the early childhood education level are the two autonomous state-funded institutions providing for children from poor families: the National Board of Kindergartens (*Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles*, JUNJI) is an autonomous public corporation entrusted by the President of the Republic under the direction of the Executive Vice-President; the INTEGRA Foundation is a non-profit private foundation, presided over by the wife of the President of the Republic. Today, the Transition Level is generally offered at preschools attached to basic education schools and thus the school principals play the role of the preschool directors. The JUNJI and INTEGRA kindergartens provide for younger children at the Nursery and Middle Levels.

Chile is ethnically and culturally diverse, and its socioeconomic structure is notoriously unequal. The National System of Education Quality Measurement (SIMCE), which presents annually the results of the national assessment of curriculum-based student learning outcomes, indicates that the higher a student's socioeconomic status is, the higher the test scores they obtain in all subject areas – and these unequal learning outcomes have not changed over time (Chile Ministry of Education, 2008). The governmental policies of the 1990s and 2000s have consequently focussed on the poorest populations and schools with the lowest SIMCE scores. On the other hand, despite their increased political influence, indigenous peoples in Chile, and Latin America at large, have made little economic and social progress in the last decade, and continue to suffer from higher poverty, lower educational attainment, and a greater incidence of disease and discrimination than other groups (Hall and Patrinos, 2006). The 2009 national household survey reveals that compared to non-indigenous people, indigenous people have a higher poverty rate (19.9% vs. 14.8%) and adult illiteracy rate (6.1% vs. 3.3%), although these indicators and disparities have improved over the past years: in 1996 the poverty rates among indigenous and non-indigenous populations were 35.1% vs. 22.7% and the illiteracy rates were 10.0% vs. 4.6%, respectively (Chile Ministry of Planning, 2006; Chile Ministry of Planning, 2007).

According to the 2009 national household survey, 6.9% of Chile's population identified themselves as belonging to indigenous groups; however, 77.3% of the indigenous population does not speak or understand their original indigenous



language (Chile Ministry of Planning, 2007), indicating their assimilation into the Spanish-speaking mainstream. It was only in 1993 that specific rights of indigenous peoples were recognised by law (Ley Indígena No. 19253), though their ethnic and cultural identities are yet to be recognised constitutionally. Moreover, education policies related to inter-cultural and bilingual education were added relatively late to the education reform, and it was only since 1996 that a formal programme of inter-cultural bilingual education was created and put in place by the Ministry of Education – although its effects on the learning opportunities and outcome of indigenous children are yet to be demonstrated (OECD, 2004). It is noteworthy, however, that since 2003 the integration of inter-cultural bilingual education into the early childhood education curriculum has been promoted, and the Policy on Inter-Culturality in Early Childhood Education was enacted by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, thanks to the education policies since the mid-1990s that prioritised the poorest and most vulnerable, school access has been expanded, and today there is little difference between indigenous and non-indigenous populations from early childhood to secondary education. In terms of preschool participation, the disparity has been closed substantially, as the net rates of children 0-5 years of age attending preschools for indigenous and non-indigenous populations are 36.5% and 37.5%, respectively, increasing from 14.0% and 24.2% in 1996 (Chile Ministry of Planning, 2007).

The new early childhood education curriculum established as one of the general objectives of early childhood education: ‘to promote children’s quality learning, which is pertinent and considers their ethnic, linguistic, gender diversities as well as special education needs...’ (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 23). Given the history of socioeconomic and educational inequities illustrated above, the issue of cultural diversity and equity is of crucial importance for Chile. This research presented an important and challenging academic endeavour to examine how early childhood educators in diverse contexts are managing their classrooms of diverse children and to document their perspectives regarding their experiences of using the new curriculum.

## **2. Literature Review**

In order to research how the Chilean early childhood education curriculum is implemented, there were several key dimensions that needed to be studied through existing literature in order to narrow down the research question. First, this enquiry is looking at the interpretation and realisation of a national early childhood education curriculum into classroom practice, which is essentially a policy implementation process. Therefore, theoretical literature on education policies was reviewed. Second, although related to the first, are practitioners' perceptions and challenges in implementing new education policies and curricula within classrooms. To this end, empirical research on this topic, particularly the challenges experienced by classroom teachers in implementing new national early childhood education curricula, was reviewed. The third dimension deals with early childhood educators' pedagogical practices that support development and learning of all children. In the fourth category, the Chilean early childhood education curriculum is analysed briefly, in light of the previous three sections.

### **2.1 Education Policies**

In this research, Chile's early childhood education curriculum was studied as an education policy, which Codd (1988) defines as 'any course of action (or inaction) relating to the selection of goals, the definition of values or the allocation of resources' (p. 247). According to Ball (2000), however, 'more often than not analysts fail to define conceptually what they mean by policy', whose meaning is often taken for granted (p. 1831). Raab (1994, p. 7) asserts that there is no agreed definition of policy, and there is thus little point in trying to agree on the definitions of its formulation (policy-making) or its practice (policy implementation). Nevertheless, I found Ball's two conceptualisations of policy particularly useful: policy as text and policy as discourse (Ball, 2000, p. 1831).

In the first sense, an education policy is a product normally in the form of a written text. It is an expression of political purpose or a statement of the course of action that policy-makers intend to follow (Codd, 1988, p. 237). A policy as a text, however, can manifest itself differently, for example, as a stated intention, an action undertaken by the government, an organisational or administrative arrangement or an indication of the formal status of a course of action (Baldock, Fitzgerald and Kay, 2005, pp. 2-3). Moreover, policy as text is not necessarily 'clear or closed or

complete', as such texts are a product of negotiations and compromises among different authors involved; in other words, it has 'an interpretational and representational history' (Ball, 2000, p. 1832). A policy thus 'reflects the outcomes of the competing social, political and professional imperatives' (Anning, 1998, p. 300). In practice, analysing a policy as a text indicates a process of literary reading of a written document to understand the intentions and assumptions behind the text.

Policy as discourse, on the other hand, indicates understanding not only the product (i.e. policy as text) but also the processes and effects of policies. The concept of discourse, advanced by Michel Foucault (e.g., 1972; 1981), is summarised by Ball (1990) as follows:

Discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations (p. 2).

Unlike the Marxist conception of power as oppression by a dominant class, Foucault conceptualises that power is exercised – rather than possessed – through a production of 'truth' and knowledge as discourse (Olssen, Codd and O'Neill, 2004, p. 23). In this sense, 'truth' does not represent some objective reality but it is a set of dominant ideas that come 'to be accepted as true at a particular time and in a particular place' (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005, p. 141). The policy is 'a politically, socially and historically contextualized practice or set of practices' (Olssen, Codd and O'Neill, 2004, p. 3). On divine, ideological or scientific bases—depending on the time and space—, a certain dominant discourse is produced in a given society and is practiced systematically and maintained by the whole society, while underlying assumptions and values remain invisible. Foucault calls such dominant discourses as 'regimes of truth', through which people govern themselves and others (Ball, 2000, p. 1837).

From this perspective, education policies as discourse are seen as both reflections and instruments of a regime of truth of a given society at a given time in history, as they are built upon and reproduce the dominant discourses. For this reason, education policies, such as the core curriculum or assessment systems, are the official discourse of the state, and they are 'obvious instances in which discourse becomes the instrument and object of power' (Codd, 1988, p. 243). Analysing education policies thus entails the examination of not only the product but also the

processes and effects of policies. In this sense, it is also important to explore the linkages between the various levels in the policy process, from a broader historical and political level to a classroom level, whereby the 'contexts, texts and consequences' of the policy are critically analysed (Taylor, 1997, pp. 32-33).

In the field of early childhood education, there are several tensions related to early childhood education policies, including curricula, as a result of different conceptualisations of the child and child/human development (to be elaborated in Chapter 3). One tension surrounds the post-modernist critique of the dominant Anglo-American conceptualisation of early childhood and the universalistic promotion of 'developmentally appropriate practices' based on a particular culture and discipline (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 1999; Moss, 2007; Penn, 2002; Penn, 2005). This critique for its part has been also criticised as providing a 'false duality between naïve realism and radical relativism' (Siraj-Blatchford, 2008). Another tension suggested by early childhood education researchers is the dichotomy between developmentally appropriate practices (characterised to be, for example, age-based, child-centred/initiated, play-based activities) and the academically oriented curriculum introduced by the central governments (e.g., Anning, 1998; Goldstein, 2007). Moreover, the globalisation discourse based on the neo-liberal economic doctrine and the neo-conservative political doctrine is often criticised as resulting in unequal opportunities given to different social groups (e.g., Penn, 2005; Vandebroek, 2006). These tensions surrounding early childhood education policies reflect their discursive nature and directly affect early childhood educators who are expected to implement the policies and curricula at the classroom level.

## **2.2 Implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Teachers' Experiences and Challenges**

According to Alvestad and Duncan (2006), little research has been done to examine the implementation of national curricula, although there is growing research in the field of early childhood education (p. 34). While not abundant, existing literature on teachers' perceptions of the implementation of national curricula points to some of the tensions mentioned above.

For example, Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford and Johnson (1992) and Cox (1996) studied the perspectives of teachers regarding the impacts of the standard-based primary curriculum introduced in 1989 in England and Wales on early childhood classrooms, while Hodson and Keating (2007) and Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002) investigated the reactions of reception class teachers to the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (3-5 years of age) introduced in 2000. These studies in the United Kingdom found that the teachers' reaction was to generally welcome the initiative while also expressing concern for certain aspects, such as the overloaded and heavily subject-oriented curricular content and the need for professional training.

More recent enquires into the practitioners' experiences of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in England (Brooker *et al.*, 2010; Tickell, 2011) documented generally high levels of support from diverse practitioner groups, who welcomed the play-based and child-led nature of the guidance, while certain aspects of the EYFS were criticised by some practitioners, including the age-associated developmental guidance ('Development Matters'). Both Brooker et al.'s and Tickell's studies pointed out the need for the practitioners to inform and involve parents and guardians to support their children's development. While Brooker et al. noted the significant variations among practitioners in training and confidence in implementing the EYFS and their variable practices particularly in assessments, Tickell's review went far to recommend a drastic reduction in number (from 69 to 17) and simplification of early learning goals and the assessment of children's development level at age 5 ('EYFS Profile', from 117 to 20 items). These studies, while noting the general appreciation for the national curriculum, depict the diversity of practitioners' challenges and experiences.

Related to such heterogeneity of practitioners' experiences, Wood (2004b), who reviewed different early childhood policy frameworks since the late 1980s in England, concluded that the relationship between policy and practice was not seamless, and the 'activities of policy-making and policy implementation [were] fundamentally different and pursued in multiple contexts, by different people with different, and sometimes conflicting agendas' (p. 366). On her part, Kable (2001) investigated how a group of early childhood teachers in Queensland, Australia made sense of the first systematically developed curriculum guidelines and found that teachers constructed contradictory interpretations of the new curriculum text. For

example, teachers perceived the curriculum guidelines as both the government's endorsement for the existing child-centred philosophies and practices and its expectations for teachers to change their ways of planning and describing children. She thus concludes that the preschool curriculum is negotiated within complex and unstable discourses and power relations (p. 321).

Wood (2004b), in studying several national policy initiatives in England particularly since the Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning in 1996, observed a gradual shift from a learner-oriented, play-based model to more formal, teacher-directed and curriculum-centred teaching approach. She argued that in spite of these trends and the downward pressure of curricular overload that teachers felt to prepare children for Year 1, there were varying degrees of resistance, mediation and adaptation among the teachers, depending on their experience and length of service (p. 369). Goldstein (2007) also found, through interviews with and observation of kindergarten teachers in the USA, that the teachers fulfilled both their commitment to developmentally appropriate teaching practices (based on child-centred, progressive education approach) and their responsibility to teach the predetermined knowledge and skills mandated by the state curricula in different manners. These studies provide important insights into preschool teachers' interpretation and recontextualisation of early childhood curricula.

In addressing the challenges faced by early education teachers in implementing new policies and curricula, Hodson and Keating (2007) found that while professional training of early childhood teachers remains an important concern, particularly in the area of child development, early childhood teachers have a major challenge of managing significant numbers of adults in their setting, such as staff, parents and other adults, as well as the curriculum and classroom resources. They conclude that head teachers, governors and parents often place unreasonable demands on reception teachers who may have limited understanding of the needs of young children and the unique nature of the early childhood curriculum (p. 78). Moreover, Alvestad and Duncan (2006) found that one of the main concerns raised by the teachers and other commentators on the New Zealand curriculum *Te Whāriki* was over the lack of guidance and direction for methods outlined within. They argued that by embracing diversity in early childhood provision, the *Te Whāriki* required teachers to be well trained and supported with professional development to work with a curriculum

which promoted a very different view of learning and teaching from previous years in New Zealand.

Gupta (2001) documented a change process she initiated at a pre-primary school in India, where she used to work as a classroom teacher. After coming back from her MA study in the USA, she introduced the 'Western progressive' approach to classroom management and teaching, using more child-centred practice and free play, which represented not only a curricular change but systemic changes in the school culture, teacher attitudes, student expectations and the prescribed pre-primary curriculum that focussed on academic skill development and close adherence to a formal syllabus. She concluded that the success of such a restructuring process and the continuation of an authentic change depended on 'facilitating a paradigm shift in the model of thinking of those who will implement the change' (p. 40). She suggested as facilitating factors for the success of her case the local adaptation of the Western classroom techniques, the internal initiation –rather than external imposition– of the change, and the support and openness of the principal for the new initiative. On the other hand, she also identified challenges and constraints encountered. First, the large number of children in each classroom (rather than the teacher-pupil ratio) led to a high noise level, shortage of space, the difficulty to manage children in child-centred environment and the limited teachers' time given to each individual child. Second, available material resources were not sufficient to equip each classroom, though this challenge was overcome by teachers making materials and using students work (e.g. 'books' made of students work of story-telling and inventive or pretend writing). The third challenge was the time factor: given the existing academic syllabus, teachers struggled to incorporate child-centred activities.

In this last respect, Hargreaves (1994) pointed out that shortage of time is one of the perennial complaints of teachers and appears as the chief problem of implementation in the studies of educational change, school improvement, curriculum implementation and staff development:

Scarcity of time makes it difficult to plan more thoroughly, to commit oneself to the effort of innovation, to get together with colleagues, or to sit back and reflect on one's purposes and progress. How much time teachers get away from classroom duties, to work with colleagues or just to reflect on their own, is a vital issue for matters of change, improvement and professional development (p. 15).

As another key factor, Alvestad and Duncan (2006) stressed that teachers need to have ‘ownership’ of any curriculum, while ‘any enactment, or implementation, of the curriculum entails both a willingness to undertake the ideas within the document, and an understanding of the content, by teachers’ (p. 34). In this sense, Wong’s case studies (2003) of early childhood teachers in Hong Kong, who were required to implement a new curriculum, showed that besides the necessary professional development, the attitude and support of administrators/principals and parents are vital factors not only for the success of the curricular changes but also for early childhood teachers’ job satisfaction. On the other hand, Kwon (2004) found that despite the child-centred rhetoric of the new Korean National Kindergarten Curriculum and teachers’ beliefs, the teachers’ actual classroom practice remained teacher-directed and academically oriented, influenced by the traditional Korean education values and parental pressure. These studies confirm a paradigm shift in the way of thinking that has to happen among those who will implement the change as mentioned above. In this sense, classroom teachers’ ownership and understanding of the new curriculum as well as consensus among the management, classroom teachers and parents in the process seem to be key factors.

### **2.3 Effective Pedagogy in Early Childhood**

The previous section illustrated the gaps that exist between the intentions of education policies and their actual implementation, highlighting some of facilitating factors and constraints in bringing about changes in teachers’ classroom practice through new curricula. If the curriculum is understood as the content of educational activities and expected learning outcomes, it is useful to examine what constitutes good practice or effective pedagogy for early childhood educators who organise children’s learning activities.

The term ‘pedagogy’ can be defined simply as ‘the principles, methods and approaches to teaching’ (Sanders *et al*, 2005, p. 14) or more specifically ‘the particular selection of educational practices and techniques that are applied to realise the curriculum’ (Siraj-Blatchford and Wong, 1999, p. 8). According to Anning *et al*. (2004), today in early childhood settings influenced by developmental, play-based curriculum, the maxim ‘children learn through play’ constitutes a ‘pedagogical given’, in which practitioners are seen as managers of the learning environment and facilitator of children’s development and learning, but less as teachers (p. 17). As a



result, Wood (2004a) observed that while there is indeed substantial evidence on learning through play, relatively little has been researched on teaching through play. She argued that a consistent feature of pedagogical strategies adopted by contemporary early childhood curriculum models, such as Te Whāriki (New Zealand), First Steps (Western Australia), Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum (USA) and Reggio Emilia (Italy), was that 'learning through play is not left to chance, but is channelled through complex reciprocal and responsive relationships, and is situated in activities which are socially constructed and mediated' (p. 20). Siraj-Blatchford (2004b) also argued that teaching is implicit in pedagogy and the role of teachers is thus central to the analysis of quality provision in early childhood education (p. 137).

This indicates that early childhood educators have the critical role to play and in order to fulfil this role effectively they need to have a high level of professional knowledge and skills. The Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years project (REPEY) in the United Kingdom (Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, 2002) found that in the most effective pre-school settings (in terms of intellectual, social and dispositional outcomes) teachers provide both teacher-initiated group work and freely chosen yet potentially instructive play activities, encourage 'sustained shared thinking', create a good balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated activities and extend child-initiated activities. In particular, sustained shared thinking in which 'two or more individuals "work together" in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, or extend a narrative' (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009, pp. 78-79) has been identified as an effective pedagogic interaction to support children's learning. Moreover, trained teachers used the most sophisticated pedagogy, including sustained shared thinking, while less qualified staff promoted more sustained shared thinking when working with qualified teachers. Siraj-Blatchford *et al*. (2002) also note that adults' interventions in play activities freely chosen by children in an instructive learning environment are especially effective, but these interactions rarely occur in practice.

In this sense, high teacher involvement and high children's freedom not only can coexist (Tzuo, 2007), but balancing high teacher initiative and high children initiative is a component within the art of effective pedagogy. Along the same line, Jordan (2004) stated that early childhood educators need to move flexibly between

scaffolding children's specific learning on one hand and co-constructing meanings with children when the topic is open-ended to promote children's empowerment as learners on the other. From this perspective, the most important objective of early childhood educators, according to Siraj-Blatchford (2004b), is 'to achieve a high degree of intrinsic motivation and involvement in the activity in the short term and improved learning dispositions such as perseverance in the long term' (p. 141).

Another important finding of the REPEY study is that children's learning outcomes (pre-reading, early number concepts and picture similarities) were significantly correlated with the diversity subscale of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Extension (ECERS-E), which focussed on the curricular differentiation for individuals and groups, gender and race equality, meeting individual needs, record keeping and ability grouping (Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva, 2004; Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, 2002). In fact, the quality practices related to the diversity subscale were associated with as many as five of the nine cognitive and social/behavioural attainment categories, scoring higher than any of the other subscales including 'literacy'. This conclusion highlights the possibilities that early childhood education makes a real difference for all children and that provisions made by practitioners to cater for diversity are especially effective in overcoming disadvantage and even structural inequalities associated with socio-economic class, gender and ethnicity in the early years (Siraj-Blatchford, 2004a).

## **2.4 Chile's Early Childhood Education Curriculum**

The analysis of Chile's early childhood education curriculum as an education policy requires both deconstructing the 111-page text itself (policy as text) and critically examining the processes of its implementation and internalisation of its discourse by classroom practitioners (policy as discourse).

The early childhood education curriculum was developed as part of the Curricular Reform, which started officially in 1996 in the context of the Educational Reform and focussed first on the basic education and secondary education curricula. The curricular bases were developed in response to the needs 1) to reorient the learning opportunities of young children to reflect the political, socio-cultural changes in the country, 2) to harmonise early childhood education with the curricular reforms implemented at other levels and 3) to integrate the three existing levels (i.e. nursery,

middle and transitional) into one single curricular instrument (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 8). The development of the early childhood education curriculum was initiated in 1998 by an inter-sectoral commission under the leadership of the Ministry of Education. It took three years of intensive discussions among relevant institutions at national and regional levels (e.g. judicial and executive branches, research institutions, institutions and unions related to teachers) and broad public consultations including some 1,000 educators and over 4,000 families (UNESCO-ORELAC and Chile Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 18), before it was finally approved by a supreme decree in 2001. Given this high level of public participation in its development as well as incorporation of the latest research evidence, the Ministry of Education considers that this curriculum has high validation and legitimacy.

The introduction to the curriculum document states that:

The Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases constitute a broad and flexible reference framework, which allows diverse forms of realisation. Its definitions are centred on the learning and development objectives to favour and achieve; its orientations for how [to reach these objectives] are general and should be specified and realised by [each educational setting]... Accordingly, the curricular bases allow working with different curricular emphases considering, among other variations, ethnic and linguistic diversity and the requirements of children with special educational needs (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 7, my translation).

I noted in my prior analysis of diverse Chilean education policies (Umayahara, 2007) that in contrast with Chile's general education policies that tend to follow the human capital discourse with emphasis on productivity and competitiveness in the globalised world, its early childhood education policies, including the curricular bases, are humanistic and value-oriented. The first chapter of the curricular document starts with 'value orientations' focusing on the rights and fundamental freedom of the child. Moreover, the document states that families also have the responsibility for education of young children. The stated role of an early childhood educator can be characterised as diverse and demanding: a 'trainer and reference model' for children together with their families, 'designer, implementer and evaluator' of the curricula and 'mediator of learning', while at the same time it is considered to be a fundamental part of the educator's professional duty to be a

‘permanent action researcher and the energiser of educational communities to be organised around young children’s learning requirements’ (Op. cit. p. 14).

The curriculum offers eight ‘pedagogic principles’ for its implementation, which can be summarised as follows:

- 1) well-being: each child’s needs and interests are to be fully considered and attended.
- 2) activity: each child is the protagonist of his/her learning and learns by acting, feeling and thinking.
- 3) singularity: each child is a unique being with different characteristics, needs, interests and strengthens and thus learns with different styles and rhythms.
- 4) empowerment: the teaching-learning process should give each child the feeling of confidence in his/her capacities to face harder and new challenges.
- 5) relation: learning environments should provide significant interactions with other children and adults as emotional links as well as sources for learning.
- 6) unity: the child is indivisible and the learning experiences should be provided in an integrated manner.
- 7) meaning: an educational experience provides the best learning when it is linked to the child’s previous experiences and knowledge.
- 8) play: learning experiences should be created through play.

The curriculum is structured around three areas of learning experiences: 1) personal and social formation, 2) communication and 3) relation with national and cultural environment. Within each of these three areas, general learning objectives are formulated as “learning nuclei”, and each learning nucleus represents a set of capacity, values and knowledge that each child should develop through early childhood education. While these first two levels represent broad categories, the third level specifies the learning outcomes that the child is expected to demonstrate and the pedagogic orientations (theories, guidance and possible activities) for educators. This third level is divided into two cycles corresponding to the age groups (birth to 3 years and 3 years to 6 years of age or entry into basic education) (Appendix 1). These main components of the curriculum are followed by general guidance on planning, formation of educational communities, organisation of space and time and evaluation. While planning of activities with children is left for

educators to decide according to the emphasis given by respective settings and programmes, the curriculum sets general planning criteria (pp. 89-90):

- a) contextualisation and diversification: planning should be adapted to the needs, strengths and characteristics of children, their families and community.
- b) selection and gradualness of learning: the selection of the expected learning and planning of activities should be clearly relevant and pertinent to children, based on the diagnostics of the previously achieved learning.
- c) systematisation and flexibility: while planning is consistent and systematic, in accordance with the characteristics, strengths and needs of children, learning activities can be diversified for individual children or groups of children.
- d) integratedness: the selection of expected learning outcomes and activities should aim at integrated development of each child and thus seek a balance among different learning areas.
- e) participation: while the educator leads the technical process of planning, expectations and support of different community members, especially families, should be taken into account. Children's participation in selecting themes, projects, activities and materials should be also facilitated.

Research on the implementation of the Chilean early childhood education curriculum is scarce and the limited literature is mostly published by the Ministry of Education, sometimes in collaboration with international organisations such as UNESCO and UNICEF. One such publication deals with the experiences at eleven pilot centres in the Metropolitan region (Díaz *et al*, 2002). In this study, the early childhood educators reported that one of the most revealing aspects of the new curriculum is the renewed concept of the child as having higher learning potentials and that educators need at least three conditions to be met in order to initiate the curricular changes: first, time to study and deepen the understanding of its content; second, instances for sharing of good practices among educators; and third, support of school authorities such as the heads of the pedagogical technical units and principals (pp. 53-55). Other lessons learnt include the importance of continuous, diversified in-service training, the need for varied learning materials –rather than sophisticated ones– and the challenge of involving parents and families.

Bustos *et al*. (2006) observed that while educators took part in different instances of training, reflection and discussions, the change processes were more on the

conceptual level than at the level of daily practice and educators seemed to continue being the protagonists in the classroom (p. 83). Moreover, despite (or perhaps due to) the flexible and open framework of the curriculum, educators did not develop pedagogic innovations and continued wanting materials and resources that explicitly instructed them in what, how and when to do things in the classroom. Bustos et al. concluded that the courses and workshops given to educators did not have a major impact on their practice or the quality of education they imparted, except in those schools with a democratic style of leadership and a culture of teamwork and openness to the community. Some of these challenges were also echoed in the ethnographic study carried out by Bonometti et al. (2004) in the Eighth Region, which highlighted educators' difficulties, such as lack of time and resources and the sense of isolation, as well as the facilitating factors in the process of innovation, such as the incorporation of school community, institutional support and systematic formative mediation of teacher-advisors. Bonometti et al. also noted that the changes and innovations observed by educators and researchers (e.g. systematic planning and evaluation of pedagogical processes) were essentially of instrumental character and should have been in place in the first place; such change in the 'form' itself does not represent a substantial change in the role of educators, which is what the curricular reform is aiming to accomplish.

These studies on the early stage of curricular implementation and the pedagogical practices of early childhood educators shed light on the complexity of the curricular implementation process. However, research on the new early childhood curriculum from the perspective of 'effects of policies' is scarce in Chile and thus provides a fertile field for further research.

### 3. Theoretical Framework:

As mentioned in the Chapter 1, my research interest lies in the exploration of the diverse realities between what is happening in the classroom and how educators are experiencing the introduction of the new curriculum. I therefore framed this research within a constructivist paradigm, which ‘seeks to uncover multiple realities as they are experienced by individual participants’ and ‘use[s] participants’ voices and rich contextual descriptions that allow readers to place themselves in the shoes of the participants’ (Hatch, 2007, p. 225). Moreover, both UNESCO’s definition of inclusive education and the general objective of Chile’s early childhood education emphasise all children’s participation in learning, but within their cultural context. For this reason, the sociocultural theory of human development and inclusive education are the theoretical frameworks for this research.

#### 3.1 Sociocultural Theory of Human Development

Rogoff (1998) argues that the unit of analysis of cognitive development should be the ‘sociocultural activity’ rather than the individual, to which a great body of research has focussed on and merely added ‘social factors’ (p. 680). Her central argument is that development and learning entail individuals’ ‘*transformation of participation* in sociocultural activity’ and thus individuals are not separate entities from the sociocultural activities in which they participate (Rogoff, 1998, p. 687, original emphasis). In other words, humans develop as they participate in their communities’ cultural activities, which also develop through the participation and contributions of generations of community members.

Rogoff draws this argument particularly from the cultural-historical theory of Vygotsky, who argued that individual functioning develops through the social, cultural and historical processes and thus the child’s development and learning take place through interactions with other (more skilled) members of the society in the ‘zone of proximal development (ZPD)’:

[ZPD] is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

From this perspective, learning and development are closely interrelated but not the same: learning awakens and results in the development of internal mental processes,

and such processes can operate only when the child is interacting with people in his/her environment. The role of an educator is therefore to create the ZPD and a variety of internal development processes in which the child interacts with adults and co-operates with his/her peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90). In his words, 'human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Bronfenbrenner (2005), on the other hand, proposed the influential ecological perspective and defined development as 'a lasting change in the way in which a person perceives and deals with his or her environment', placing the developing person at the innermost level of the 'ecological environment' of a nested system, like a Russian doll (p. 50). He conceptualised the contexts of development in terms of a hierarchy of systems from the individual's most proximal to distal environment: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Op. cit. pp. 80-81). Rogoff (2003), however, disagreed with the separation between the individual and the cultural processes within the ecological environment, and she defined human development as a 'process of people's changing participation in sociocultural activities of their communities' (p. 52). She proposed three developmental processes (apprenticeship, guided participation and participatory appropriation) that correspond to the three planes of analysis –personal, interpersonal and community processes– and which are inseparable and mutually constituting (Rogoff, 1995, p. 139).

Following Rogoff's notion of child development as changing participation in sociocultural activity, New (1999) argued that in order to provide the child with an opportunity to acquire skills and understandings that are congruent with the culture, a curriculum that is primarily child-centred is not sufficient; 'the integrated curriculum' has to make explicit the 'connections between learning experiences in an educational environment and children's whole lives, including their experiences both inside and *outside* the classroom' (p. 272, original emphasis). Edwards (2003) observed that the sociocultural theory of human development, particularly as developed by Vygotsky and later by Rogoff, has increasingly gained importance as an informant to the early childhood education curriculum, but the manners in which this theory is being utilised in the field of early childhood education are diverse. She identified three main 'pathways': the assimilated positivist path (the revised



developmentally appropriate practice, which assimilates the sociocultural descriptions of development into the existing positivist theoretical framework); the transformative path (adaptation of the three developmental planes identified by Rogoff as the basis for curriculum planning and programming); and the social-constructivist path (as exemplified by the Reggio Emilia programmes, social interactions and contexts are viewed as mediators of development, while an emphasis on cognitive activity and conceptual construction is maintained).

Educators, too, construct their understanding and knowledge through their changing participation in sociocultural activities, and their beliefs and teaching practice are constructed through social, cultural and historical experiences. In this sense, Gupta's study (2006) is of particular relevance to this current research, as she showed how Indian preschool teachers negotiated and balanced three different educational philosophies (the values underlying the Indian philosophy, the British colonial academic contents and methods, and the discourse of the American progressive education) in what she called 'postcolonial hybridity' (p. 196). She concluded that teachers also, in learning to teach, are engaged in a process of sociocultural constructivism. The sociocultural theory therefore informs my research at two levels: first, how the new early childhood education curriculum allows early childhood educators to support children's learning through their participation in particular sociocultural contexts and second, how educators are making sense of and balancing the new curriculum in their own sociocultural contexts.

### **3.2 Education for Diversity and Inclusive Education**

As stated in the introduction, this research follows UNESCO's definition of inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners, based on the premise that it is each learner's fundamental right to access, take full part in and achieve the desired outcomes from equal learning opportunities. Hick and Thomas (2009) stated that while inclusive education has developed from the long history of special education in the past twenty years or so, the focus of inclusive education is 'diversity and social justice just as much as it is mainstreaming and diversity' (pp. xxiii-xxiv). The view that inclusion represents such unquestionable moral imperative, however, is often challenged by those who argue that the rights of the child to have maximum access to mainstream education need to be balanced by their right to an effective education, appropriate to their

needs (Frederickson and Cline, 2009, p. 78). Nevertheless, Frederickson and Cline (2009), who reviewed the issues surrounding inclusion and special educational provision, concluded that where inclusion is embraced, educational provision carefully structured to meet a diversity of needs, and flexible, personalized programmes were delivered, research into social and academic outcomes for pupils with special educational needs has identified net benefits (pp. 100-101).

Their conclusion is supported by the finding of the REPEY study (Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, 2002) that young children's learning outcomes are strongly related to the learning environments that embrace learners' diversity, including through the curricular differentiation for individuals and groups. Moreover, in order to support children's learning and development, teaching practices need to be responsive to not only their individual needs but also their sociocultural differences, and educating all children requires 'the will and commitment to understand and respond to cultural difference' (Bowman and Stott, 1994, p. 131). That is why many early childhood scholars insist on the sociocultural appropriateness of teaching practices, in addition to the age and individual factors that are emphasised in developmentally appropriate practices (e.g., Bowman and Stott, 1994; Phillips, 1994; Woodhead, 1999a). Woodhead (1997; 1999b) argued that developmental psychology –particularly its psychometric tradition– has contributed to the standardisation of expected children's development and to the promotion of policies and practices to meet their developmental needs. While children do need nutrition, protection, learning experiences, etc. for their sound development and well-being, he points out that the developmental psychology discourse assumes a certain model of the child and its needs are based on a particular culture of Euro-American origin, and as a result, 'when policy recommendations and professional advice are expressed in terms of children's needs, they give an impression of universal objectivity' (Woodhead, 1997, pp. 74-75).

UNESCO's definition suggests that inclusive education is a process of ensuring each learner to participate in learning, culture and community. Such education recognises and responds to not only learners' diverse individual characteristics but also their diverse sociocultural experiences. Moreover, for educators, inclusive and multicultural education practice goes beyond including in the curriculum or classroom activities 'content about ethnic groups, women, and other cultural groups'

or modifying their teaching methods and materials so as to reduce learners' prejudice against these groups (Banks, 2005, pp. 3-4), as important as these actions are. According to Banks, an 'equity pedagogy' exists 'when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, ethnic, language, and gender groups' and this involves 'using a variety of teaching styles and approaches that are consistent with the wide range of learning styles within various cultural and ethnic groups (Banks, 2005, p. 15 and p. 18). It means that educators must be aware of the learners' sociocultural backgrounds and their specific, yet diverse, learning styles and both consciously and constantly maintain that awareness to modify their everyday practice.

From this perspective, the sociocultural theory and the human rights-based concept of inclusion are closely related, because for early childhood educators to support all children's learning for their development (understood as changing participation in sociocultural activities of their communities), addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners is an essential condition:

All children have the right to an early childhood curriculum that supports and affirms their gender, cultural and linguistic identities and backgrounds...Early childhood educators need to examine their own attitudes and prejudices and learn to deal with them in positive ways (Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke, 2001, p. 67).

UNESCO's Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All (UNESCO, 2005) states that Education for All means 'ensuring that all children have access to basic education of good quality' and this implies 'creating an environment in schools and in basic education programmes in which children are both able and enabled to learn' (p.10).

It is within this broad theoretical framework that this research examines how early childhood educators in Chile are managing their classrooms, reconciling the individual and societal levels of sociocultural diversity, and how the national early childhood education curriculum is facilitating or challenging their classroom practice.

#### 4. Research Questions

As mentioned, the reports from the Ministry of Education on the early experience of the curricular implementation in Chile were quite positive and mainly documented good practices. However, the small body of studies focussing on educators' experiences in Chile, and most of the research in other countries on this theme, point to the various challenges educators faced as well as the discrepancy between their discourse and their practice.

This research aimed at analysing how Chilean educators were experiencing the introduction of the national early childhood education curriculum put in place in 2002 and how their classroom practice is meeting the diverse needs of children. And this analysis should help 'understand the multiple constructions of meaning and knowledge' (Robson, 2002, p. 27). Therefore, this research aimed to answer the broad question:

How do early childhood educators in Chile implement the national Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases to meet the needs of diverse groups of children?

Under this general question, four specific questions were researched:

- 1) What challenges do early childhood educators face in implementing the Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases?
- 2) What challenges do educators face in meeting the needs of diverse children and how are they overcoming these challenges?
- 3) What elements of the Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases facilitate or challenge the work of educators in serving the needs of diverse groups of children?
- 4) To what extent is effective pedagogy practiced by Chilean educators?

The ultimate purpose of the research was thus to reflect on the inclusive and effective pedagogical practice in early childhood education.

## 5. Research Design

The research consisted of case studies drawn from three different regions of Chile. The central unit of analysis was the early childhood educators and their classrooms in three municipal schools located in Arica (north), Santiago (central) and Temuco (south). Classes of both pre-kinder and kinder years were selected in each school, and six classes in total were observed.

According to Yin (2003), a case study is ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (p. 13). It is an all-encompassing research strategy, covering the logic of design, data collection techniques and specific approaches to data analysis, rather than a data collection tactic or a design feature (p. 14).

Edwards (2001, p. 126) underlines that the focus of case studies by nature is internal and comparison of the cases is of secondary concern: ‘each case has within it interrelationships that both bind it together and shape it but also interact with the external world’ (p. 126). She states that the function of the cases is mainly illustrative and that despite the potential of the exemplary cases to draw a picture of a wider population, their generalisation would demand considerable caution (p. 127). Stake (1998, p. 98) also warns that although comparison among ‘multiple cases of intrinsic interests’ is useful, careless comparison should be avoided ‘because there are too many ways to be different’ –and similar.

Since the purpose of the research was to analyse multiple perspectives of the curricular implementation, it was deemed most appropriate to carry out the case studies using mainly qualitative research methods.

### 5.1 Sampling

Three municipal schools with preschool classes were selected purposefully in the effort to represent the geography of this long and thin country (thus selecting schools from the northern, central and southern regions of the country) as well as the cultural diversity of its inhabitants by drawing from both the capital city and the two regions with the largest indigenous populations. The three regions studied<sup>1</sup> were: the Metropolitan Region of Santiago that includes the capital city Santiago, Region XV of Arica y Parinacota in the north and Region IX of Araucanía. Region IX of

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<sup>1</sup> Chile consists of 15 regions, which are numbered with Roman numerals from I to XV and with a corresponding name (e.g. Region I is the “Region of Tarapacá”), except for the Metropolitan Region of Santiago which is not numbered. There is no Region XIII, as the Metropolitan Region was often associated with this number, and the two new regions (XV “Region of Arica and Parinacota” and XIV “Region of los Rios”) were created officially in October 2007.

Araucanía has the highest proportion of its population belonging to indigenous groups (30.1% of the region's population, predominantly the *Mapuches*) followed by Region XV of Arica y Parinacota (25.4%, primarily the *Aymaras*). Only 4.1% of the Metropolitan Region population belongs to indigenous groups, but it accounts for 24.0% of the all indigenous population of the country given the capital's population size (Chile Ministry of Planning, 2007).

For the selection of a classroom in each region, the criteria used to determine the diversity of children was their socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, while that for educators' experience was the length of time they had worked with the new curriculum (e.g. at least 2 academic cycles). Preschool classrooms of the Transition Level (*Nivel de Transición*), covering children four to six years of age, attached to municipal or subsidised private schools were sought, because the Transition Level has relatively high representation of different populations thanks to governmental subsidies provided to children from low-income families of this age group, therefore classrooms were more likely to be diverse and include disadvantaged groups.

Schools and the teachers were selected through typical case sampling to provide the qualitative profile of 'typical' cases, 'selected with the cooperation of key informants, such as program staff or knowledgeable participants, who can help identify what is typical' (Patton, 1990, p. 173). According to Patton, the qualitative profiles obtained through this sampling method help 'describe and illustrate what is typical, rather than making generalised statements about the experiences of all participants (Ibid.)'. 'Typical' cases, as opposed to particularly successful or struggling cases, seemed appropriate for the purpose of this research.

In order to have a typical case selected from each region, I contacted the Early Childhood Education Unit of the Ministry of Education through the UNESCO Office in Santiago and obtained the support of the national co-ordinator of this unit in establishing contact with the regions. It turned out that the selection of schools had to go through a very formal and lengthy procedure due to Chile's decentralised school governance structure. Initially, I had hoped that as a key informant, the National Co-ordinator of Early Childhood Education Unit select a school from each region for me; however, due to this decentralised structure, she too had to go through the formal channel of the Ministry's Regional Secretariats. As a result, the Director of UNESCO/Santiago Office wrote an official letter to the Head of Division of General Education within the Ministry of Education, to which the Early Childhood Education Unit belongs, requesting the Ministry's support for my research, particularly in establishing contact with the regions. After this letter was sent from

UNESCO to the Ministry, another official letter was issued immediately from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry's Regional Secretariats, in which the Head of Division of General Education informed them about my research schedule and requesting necessary support for selecting schools for my visit. Only after this formal contact was established, was I able to contact directly the Regional Secretariats, and these were done in a remarkable short time thanks to the executive assistant of the Director of UNESCO/Santiago and the Director of Early Childhood Education Unit. Given the official green light, I contacted the Regional Secretariats by email, explaining the purpose of my research, requesting their permission for sending out a survey questionnaire and asking them to select the Transition Level classrooms, which could be described as typical of the region and attended by children from diverse backgrounds. The criteria given for the selection of classrooms was having a mixture of students from different socioeconomic statuses and indigenous and non-indigenous backgrounds.

After several emails and phone calls, the regional early childhood education co-ordinators at the Regional Secretariats selected Transition Level classrooms all attached to municipal schools and obtained consent from school directors and classroom teachers for interviews and classroom observation. This process took much longer than I had anticipated: the school in Santiago was not confirmed until the first day of my scheduled visit. Although there may be a possible sampling bias due to this very formal procedure taken, I believe that obtaining the support of the Regional Secretariats and selecting 'typical schools' would not have been possible without the official request made by the Ministry of Education.

## **5.2 Methods of Data Collection**

In designing a research project, Yin (2003) emphasises the importance of the construct validity (i.e. establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied) and reliability (i.e. demonstrating that the operations of a study can be repeated with the same results) in the process of data collection (pp. 33-39). In order to maximise the construct validity and reliability of case studies, he proposes three principles of data collection: the use of multiple sources of evidence, the creation of a case study database and the maintenance of a chain of evidence (pp. 97-105).

With respect to the first principle, methodological triangulation (i.e. the use of multiple methods to study a single programme) was used in the case studies (Patton, 1990, p. 187), by triangulating three data collection methods as detailed below: a) direct classroom observation, b) the application of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Extension (ECERS-E) and the partial application of the revised Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R) and c) semi-structured interviews of educators. In addition to the case studies, two other methods were employed. A questionnaire survey was sent out to schools in the three regions prior to the field visit, with the purpose of obtaining a broader view of preschools and teachers' curricular implementation experiences. I also interviewed key policy-makers responsible for developing and/or implementing the curriculum. The Table 1 below summarises the data collection methods used in this research.

**Table 1 Summary of Data Collection Methods**

<b>Triangulation</b>	<b>Method of data collection</b>	<b>Unit of analysis</b>
Methodological triangulation (within each case)	Direct classroom observation	Classroom activities
	Application of partial ECERS-R and full ECERS-E	Classroom environment
	Semi-structured interviews	Classroom educators
Data triangulation	Questionnaire survey	Schools (heads of pedagogical technical unit)
	Semi-structured interviews	National policy-makers

With regard to the second and third principles, the iterative process of careful recording and organisation of the field notes and the research journal, reflection, further reading and writing was employed.

### **5.2.1 Questionnaire survey**

A questionnaire (English translation in Appendix 3) was designed in order to obtain a broader picture from the three regions and to 'provide information about the distribution of a wide range of "people characteristics"' (Robson, 2002, p. 234). This self-administered survey was addressed to the heads of the pedagogical technical unit of schools (pedagogical supervisors) across the three regions, and the questionnaire was sent out to selected schools by email and by post with stamped and addressed envelopes in order to increase the response rate. Although postal surveys tend to result in a lower response and require questions to be much shorter



and simpler than face-to-face or telephone surveys, they are 'extremely efficient at providing large amounts of data, at a relatively low cost, in a short period of time' (Robson, 2002, pp. 233-238). Follow-up telephone calls were made to all schools that did not respond to the survey.

While employing careful wording and avoiding complex questions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Robson, 2002), survey questions included closed questions (e.g. basic information about the school and classroom characteristics, multiple choice, and Likert Scale questions) and a small number of open-ended questions, in order to solicit information on the characteristics of sample preschools and their experiences and perceptions related to curricular implementation. Given the illustrative purpose of the survey, a non-probability sampling strategy (i.e. the findings cannot be generalised beyond the sample itself) was considered appropriate, particularly when considering the diverse nature of the preschools in the three regions, represented in the survey. In particular, the dimensional sampling strategy (i.e. identifying various factors of interest in a population and obtaining at least one respondent with every combination of those factors) was chosen (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 115), in order to have samples of the combined factors of municipalities and preschool administration types (municipal and subsidised private preschools).

The questionnaire was piloted with five directors of preschools and kindergartens in Santiago. It was noted that the respondents completed the questionnaire very quickly (15 to 20 minutes), and left most of the open-ended questions blank. One respondent wrote a note that she could not respond to all the questions because she did not have the time or relevant documents at hand and educators were not around. The respondents confirmed that none of the questions were confusing or ambiguous, and most respondents commented that they would not eliminate any of the questions. While they sometimes gave no or very short answers to open-ended questions, it appeared that the questions were understood. Therefore, the questionnaire was not changed following the pilot. Nonetheless, one thing that was clear was that directors are very busy and not always willing to take the time to respond to the questionnaire.

For the sampling purpose, an on-line directory of educational establishments was obtained from the Ministry of Education website, which could be searched by region, education level and type of school administration. The on-line directory was downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet, and from each region the first school on the list

that had the desired combination of municipality and school administration type was selected for the sample. Selected schools were coded with numbers indicating the region, municipality and school administration type. The Metropolitan Region had the largest number of municipalities (fifty-one) to sample from (municipalities with only unsubsidised private schools were excluded), and 99 out of 1573 preschools were sampled in this region, selecting one from municipal and subsidised private preschools in each municipality (three small municipalities had only municipal preschools). Region IX had 30 municipalities, and therefore 60 preschools were sampled. On the other hand, Region XV in the north, with the second smallest population in the country (189,644 in 2002), had only 6 municipalities; and 65 out of the region's 71 preschools were in its regional capital city (Arica), while the other five municipalities had only one or two preschools (all municipal). Therefore, all six preschools from these five municipalities were included in the sample as well as 8 municipal and 8 subsidised private preschools in Arica.

The response rate from each region was as follows:

Metropolitan Region:	35 out of 99 preschools (35%)
Region IX:	10 out of 60 preschools (17%)
Region XV:	<u>6 out of 22 preschools (27%)</u>
Total:	51 out of 181 preschools (28%)

The low response rate, particularly those from Regions IX and XV, –despite the stamped and addressed envelopes and follow-up telephone calls– was disappointing. While a small number of schools could not be reached for follow-up calls, several schools that were reached indicated that they did not wish to participate in the survey. Some of the reasons given included: the absence of appropriate persons to respond to the survey, the Transition Level being closed down, and their busy schedules (including due to municipal elections for which schools were voting centres). Given the voluntary nature of the survey participation, reaching a higher response rate was judged to be difficult after the persistent follow-up. The completed questionnaires were transcribed and indexed as a database using Microsoft Excel.

### **5.2.2 Direct classroom observation**

Given my limited time available for the field work, I chose an unobtrusive observation, rather than participant observation, which requires a researcher to spend

a substantial time with members of the observed group (Robson, 2002, p. 314). According to Rolfe (2001), direct observation 'involves researchers recording the data of interest directly from their own observation of the research participants rather than indirectly via physiological measurement instruments' (p. 216). In order to observe and interpret teachers' classroom practice, I focussed on teachers' verbal and non-verbal behaviours in interacting with children. In order to obtain 'the richest account of ongoing behaviour' (Rolfe, 2001, p. 227), I kept a running record of the classroom sessions, writing down as much as I saw and heard as possible. I also observed and took photographs of the school and classroom environments and described in detail their salient features—an 'outcropping' process (Fetterman, 1989).

Initially, I had planned to spend five days and at least 15 hours of observation time in each classroom. Several factors were taken into account in selecting classrooms for observation which presented both methodological opportunities and challenges. For example, despite the recent legislation to extend the school day from a half day to a full day, this had not been implemented yet at the Transition Level, and thus all schools I visited had half-day classes. In Santiago and Temuco, they had morning and afternoon classes of both *kinder* (5 to 6 years old) and *pre-kinder* levels (4 to 5 years old), while in Arica the small enrolments forced the school to run only one *kinder* level class and one *pre-kinder* class in the morning. All preschools visited were attached to municipal basic education schools, and when I arrived at the schools on the first day, I met the principals and heads of technical pedagogical units, who informed me of the school hours and which classes to observe. All school principals encouraged me to observe both *kinder* and *pre-kinder* classrooms and interview their teachers, rather than only one classroom and one educator. This proposal seemed sensible, because it maximised my short stay in each city and allowed for data triangulation within the same school.

In addition to the half-day class hours, unexpected factors led to a shorter observation time in some schools: one day in Arica was 'lost' because it was teachers' planning day, while I was not allowed in the Santiago classrooms one day because they were filming the classroom for the teacher performance appraisal administered by the Ministry of Education. In the case of Santiago, I was able to go back to the same classrooms one week later to catch up with the observation time, but it was not possible to travel to Arica again. Moreover, September is a special

month to celebrate Chile's independence from Spain (*Fiestas Patrias*), and in Santiago, schools finished one-hour earlier in the day in order to hold a school party. In total, the observation time spent in each classroom category was as follows:

**Table 2 Number of hours spent for classroom observation**

Region	<i>Pre-kinder</i>	<i>Kinder</i>
Santiago	16 hours	15 hours
Arica	14 hours	5 hours
Temuco	17 hours	4 hours

The preference was given to the *pre-kinder* group particularly in the Arica schools, which had both classes in the morning, to be consistent with the target age groups of the ECERS-E (3 to 5 years of age) and the ECERS-R (2½ to 5 years of age). The hand-written notes of over 70 hours of observation data were typed up and the names of children and adults were changed to allow participants to remain anonymous. Table 3 presents some of the characteristics of the classrooms observed.

### 5.2.3 Application of the ECERS-E and the partial ECERS-R Scales

As part of methodological triangulation and to complement the classroom observation, I rated the environment of the three *pre-kinder* classrooms and the Santiago *kinder* classroom, using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Extension (ECERS-E) (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2006) and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale: Revised Version (ECERS-R) (Harms, Clifford and Cryer, 2005). The ECERS-R is an instrument to evaluate the quality of early childhood care and education environments, with seven subscales ('space and furnishing', 'personal care routines', 'language-reasoning', 'activities', 'interaction', 'program structure' and 'parents and staff') and a total of 43 items. It has been used and found to be appropriate in early childhood care and education settings of more than twenty countries. The ECERS-E was developed to supplement the ECERS-R by researchers in England to reflect the English National Early Childhood Curriculum and the changing notions of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2006, p. 9). The ECERS-E has four sub-scales ('literacy', 'mathematics', 'science and environment' and 'diversity') and 18 items. Each item

on both Scales is expressed as a 7-point scale: 1 (inadequate), 3 (minimal), 5 (good) and 7 (excellent).

While the whole ECERS-E was used, four subscales of ECERS-R –‘personal care routines’, ‘interaction’, ‘programme structure’ and ‘parents and staff’– of 18 items were selected to complement the ECERS-E for their particular relevance to teacher-learner interactions. Using these instruments, I assessed the classroom environments toward the end of my visit in each school after being familiarised with the environment and classroom routines. I received an introductory training on the use of the ECERS-R and followed very carefully the instructions and notes provided in the ECERS-E and ECERS-R booklets. In order to improve the intra-rater reliability, I practiced the scoring at the beginning of my field visit, took careful notes to substantiate the scoring, asked the educators follow-up questions and reviewed the score carefully before leaving the sites.

#### **5.2.4 Semi-structured interviews of educators**

As in the study of Hodson and Keating (2007), which researched early childhood teachers’ reactions to the curricular guidance for the Foundation Stage in England, a semi-structured interview on a one-to-one basis is determined the most appropriate, as it ‘allow[s] the interviewer to probe and expand on the interviewees’ responses, thus affording a greater depth to the data collection’ (p. 70).

I invited the educators of the six classrooms for individual face-to-face interviews that lasted between 40 and 60 minutes, mostly after class hours, while one teacher preferred to do it before the class hour, because she would leave the school immediately after the class was over. An informed consent was obtained from each interviewee, who was assured that the name of the school and her personal identity would remain anonymous and confidential.

The interview schedule (Appendix 4) was adapted from the interview questionnaires constructed by Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002) and Hodson and Keating (2007). The interview schedule was piloted by email and telephone with a Chilean early childhood educator whom I knew and her three colleagues, and it was slightly modified as a result of the piloting (e.g. some phrasing was changed for clarity and the question ‘how do you evaluate children?’ was added). The interviews were recorded with a MP3 player and transcribed.

### **5.2.5 Semi-structured interviews of key policy-makers**

During the first week of my field work, I interviewed two ‘critical cases’ of policy-makers: the former and the current national co-ordinators of early childhood education at the Ministry of Education (at the time of the data collection). This purposeful sampling strategy (critical case sampling) permitted logical generalisation and maximum application of information to other cases, because ‘if it’s true of this one case it’s likely to be true of all other cases’ (Patton, 1990, p. 182). An individual, semi-structured interview format was chosen, as it would allow interviewees to ‘respond in their own words to express their own personal perspectives’ (Patton, 1990, p. 278), and the interviewer could modify the order and wording of questions and flexibly employ time and attention to different topics (Robson, 2002, pp. 269-272 and 278).

These policy-makers’ answers were to be triangulated with those of classroom educators. For this reason, interview questions were similar to those addressed to educators and focussed on the challenges that educators might have experienced in the curricular implementation and how they overcame them, as well as the support (resources, training, etc.) provided them (see the interview schedule in Appendix 5). The interviews were also recorded and transcribed, to be later coded and analysed using NVivo. Given their public profiles, it was not possible to keep their identities completely anonymous. For this reason, I sent them the full transcripts of the interviews and obtained their written approval for using the interviews for my thesis research.

**Table 3 Characteristics of the Classrooms Observed**

City	Classroom	Educator		Number of classroom assistants	Number of Children	School hour	Observation time (hrs)	ECERS (E and R)	Interview
		Name (pseudonym)	Years of practice						
Arica	<i>Pre-kinder</i>	Irena	20	1 (on sick leave)	13	08:00-12:30	14	Yes	Yes
Arica	<i>Kinder</i>	Josefina	25	1 (+ 1 intern)	32	08:00-12:30	5	No	Yes
Santiago	<i>Pre-kinder</i>	Olga	17	1 (+ 1 intern)	25	14:00-18:00	16	Yes	Yes
Santiago	<i>Kinder</i>	Sylvia	18	2	20	08:00-12:30	15	Yes	Yes
Temuco	<i>Pre-kinder</i>	Mariana	2	1	26	08:30-12:30	17	Yes	Yes
Temuco	<i>Kinder</i>	Loreto	29	1	20	14:00-18:00	4	No	Yes

### 5.3 Method of Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman (1994) postulated that qualitative data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (pp. 10-12). The first challenge for this research was to reduce the five sets of primary data: (1) scores of the ECERS-E and partial ECERS-R from four classrooms (all except Arica-K and Temuco-K where I observed only one session), (2) observation notes, (3) transcripts of semi-structured interviews with the six educators, (4) responses to the survey of the heads of pedagogical technical units (pedagogical supervisors) and (5) transcripts of semi-structured interviews with the two national policy-makers.

The hand-written scores of the ECERS-E and ECERS-R were recorded into Microsoft Excel, organised into one table of items by classrooms (Appendix 6), which allowed the analysis of the scores for each case (classroom) as well as per subscale across the cases. In displaying the data, a summary graph comparing the subscale scores across centres is presented and the average scores of these cases were compared with those of the two studies in which the original ECERS was applied to preschools in Chile (Herrera and Mathiesen, 2007; Villalón *et al*, 2002).

The handwritten observation notes were typed up and coded with NVivo, employing five dimensions for coding as starting points: 1) BCEP curricular areas, 2) diversity, 3) activity structure, 4) categories of learning activities and 5) adult's pedagogic interactions. The category 'BCEP curricular areas' corresponds to the eight 'learning nuclei' of the curriculum or focus of the experience and learning, while the 'diversity' dimension was adapted from the three Diversity Items of the ECERS-E (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2006): addressing individual learning needs, gender equality and awareness, and cultural diversity (instead of race equality and awareness as originally measured). The coding example is shown in Appendix 7.

The last three dimensions were built on the REPEY study, which identified the characteristics of effective pedagogy in the Foundation Stage (i.e. balance between teacher-initiated group work and instructive free play, sustained shared thinking, balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated activities, extend child-initiated activities and consideration for diversity). The effective pedagogy identified in the REPEY study was used as a framework for data analysis because it was strongly



associated with children's social/behavioural and cognitive outcomes. The 'activity structure' seeks to capture how an activity is structured in general terms: whether it is initiated by the adult or child; how the adult-initiated activity is participated in by the educator (as a whole class, in small groups, individually with or without educator); and how the child-initiated activity is organised (as free play, participated in by the educator or extended as an educational activity for the class). The categories of learning activities and the adult's pedagogic interactions were based on those used in the REPEY study (Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, 2002, pp. 143-145).

Most of the REPEY categories and sub-categories for pedagogical interactions were relevant and useful, while a small number of modifications were necessary given its different data collection methods. The teacher observations in the REPEY were based on a target child observations (observations of an individual child every 30 second interval for 20 minutes in each of the 12 settings), and the pedagogical interactions with the target children were analysed statistically. While my observation notes were first coded with the categories presented in the REPEY study, when analysing pedagogical interactions (see an example of analysis in Appendix 8), three codes were added under the 'Sustained shared thinking' (meta-cognition, delegated to help other children and reinforcement). Moreover, the two sub-categories under 'Monitoring' were merged into one ('Monitoring'), as the distinction between 'observing' and 'available to the child' was not relevant in the observation without a target child. Finally, the 'questioning' under the 'Instruction' sub-category was divided into 'Closed' and 'Open' to differentiate the teachers' assumed intention to solicit 'the correct answer' or to encourage children to think critically or creatively.

The interview transcripts were coded with NVivo for analysis, according to the questions asked under two broad categories: diversity within the classroom and the implementation of the curriculum. In order to understand each case and compare different cases, the data of the six interviewees were coded with the same categories. In this sense, this multiple-case study helped understand the relations between a finding and its specific conditions (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 173). The coding of the interview transcripts was more inductive than that of the observation notes, creating new codes within each of the interview questions. Nevertheless, both coding

processes were ‘an iterative and constructive process which involves developing “hunches” or hypotheses and going back to interrogate the data to confirm or contradict them (Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, 2002, p. 21).

The responses to the survey questionnaire were typed and organised in an Excel spreadsheet, each row representing a respondent. Closed questions (e.g. multiple choice or yes/no questions) were coded with numbers (e.g. ‘Yes’=‘1’, ‘No’=‘0’, ‘Missing’=‘-1’). The responses to open-ended questions were examined one by one and main elements explicitly mentioned by respondents were recorded in an analytical grid for each question and the number of respondents was counted for each of the elements mentioned (see an example of this in Appendix 9).

In presenting the findings, the data analysis of the observation data is presented first (the assessment of classroom environment based on the ECERS-E and partial ECERS-R, followed by the observation of classroom practice) and then the perspective of different actors (i.e. educators, pedagogical supervisors and key national policy-makers) were analysed separately to be compared in the discussion chapter. In order to draw and verify conclusions, such tactics as ‘noting patterns and themes’ and ‘making contrasts/comparisons’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994, Chapter 10) was employed in exploring and describing the relations within the research findings. Brown and Dowling (1998, p. 98) characterise data analysis as ‘a dialogic process’ between the empirical and theoretical fields, firstly to produce a tight and coherent definition of the research problem and an extensive description of findings and secondly to make explicit the articulation between the problem and findings. The data analysis thus focussed on the participation of the individuals (educators and children) in their socio-cultural processes from the constructivist perspective, which should ‘at the very least reflect the multiple realities constructed by the respondents in the inquiry’ (Lincoln and Guba, 2002, p. 207).

#### **5.4 Ethical Considerations**

One of the ethical concerns in this research was my position as a researcher. A researcher needs both insider and outsider perspectives in the ‘process of truth seeking’ (Merton, 1972, p. 36). Although I lived and worked in Chile for nearly six years (1998-2004), speak Spanish fluently and am fairly familiar with the country, I am neither Chilean nor do I belong to the socio-cultural and socio-economic

environments of the preschool participants (educators and students). In this sense, I was an 'external-outsider' with partial understanding of and limited appreciation for the values, perspectives, and knowledge of the community studied, and consequently, there was the risk of misunderstanding and misinterpreting the behaviours within the community (Banks, 2005, p. 174).

In order to minimise the risk of solely representing the outsider perspective and to increase the validity of my research, I maintained good communication with the educators and asked them questions wherever possible (before and after class hours or during breaks), shared some of the preliminary findings and exchanged views before leaving the sites. The educators received me very warmly and soon got used to having me around sitting at a corner of the classroom busily taking notes. Children were fascinated by the arrival of a 'Chinese' lady in their classrooms, because there are very few Asians living in Chile, and many of them probably have never met one before. The educators introduced me to the children as a special visitor, and the children called me 'Aunt Mami', in the same way that early childhood educators and assistants in preschool are addressed.

As my reference came from the Regional Secretariats of the Ministry of Education, my introduction to schools was formal and through the school directors. The classroom educators and school directors were instrumental in explaining my presence at school to the children, parents or guardians as well as other educators and grade teachers in the schools, and no objection was raised by families or school staff. On the first day of my visits, the educators explained to the children and their parents or guardians that I came to observe the classroom activities for the week. School directors also introduced me to other teachers and parents or guardians when I accompanied the classes to whole-school events.

The classroom observation was meant to be unobtrusive and non-participatory and I had explained the school directors and educators that I would not intervene or participate in classroom activities. There were, however, instances in which school directors and educators unexpectedly involved me in activities or focussed children's attention on me, mostly as a welcoming gesture and hospitality for a foreign visitor. The school director in Arica and the pedagogical supervisor in Temuco, together with the educators, gave me a surprise farewell: in Temuco, the educators decided to

end the class one hour earlier than usual to invite me to a surprise tea party, while in Arica, a small farewell ceremony was organised in front of children at the end of an outdoor activity. In Santiago, during the school *cueca* dance competition, the school director suddenly introduced me to the whole crowd of preschool and basic education students as well as their families and asked me to give a speech. Moreover, a few educators – again unexpectedly – involved me in classroom activities as an educational resource to allow children to have first-hand exposure to a foreign culture and language (more details in Section 6.1). Had I known such plans, I would have tried to stop them; however, when I was caught by surprise, it was too late and culturally inappropriate to turn down the invitations. Notwithstanding these incidences, the data contamination is expected to be negligible, because these were isolated incidences in the total of 71 hours of observation and this research employed several data collection methods for the purpose of triangulation.

## 6. Data Analysis and Findings

The data analysis and findings are presented by data sets, starting from the results of the application of the ECERS-E and the partial ECERS-R and the direct classroom observation to illustrate the environment and pedagogical practice in each classroom observed. Then the perceptions of three groups of actors are analysed: educators, pedagogical supervisors and key national policy-makers.

### 6.1 Assessment of Classroom Environment (ECERS-E and ECERS-R)

The ECERS-E and the partial ECERS-R were applied to 4 classrooms (all *pre-kinder* classrooms and the *kinder* classroom in Santiago), and the summary of each classroom's average scores per subscale is presented in Table 4 (the full scores of the ECERS-E and the partial ECERS-R are in Appendix 6).

**Table 4 Summary of the average scores of the partial ECERS-R and the ECERS-E per subscale**

Scale	Subscale	Arica Pre-K	Santiago Pre-K	Santiago K	Temuco Pre-K	Average
R	Personal Care Routines	4.0	3.6	3.2	4.6	3.9
R	Interaction	6.4	4.8	5.0	7.0	5.8
R	Programme Structure	3.3	3.7	4.0	3.3	3.6
R	Parents and Staff	5.0	3.5	3.5	3.8	4.0
<b>ECERS-R Average</b>		<b>4.7</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>
E	Literacy	3.2	2.6	4.1	3.3	3.3
E	Mathematics	3.3	2.7	4.0	4.3	3.6
E	Science and Environment	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.3
E	Diversity	1.3	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.3
<b>ECERS-E Average</b>		<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Total Average</b>		<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>

On the whole, all classrooms were assessed as having the minimal level of quality provision (3 or higher but lower than 5), except the *pre-kinder* classroom in Santiago that scored slightly below that level (average 2.9). Comparing the average scores for the two scales, it is noticeable that all classrooms have much higher scores for the partial ECERS-R than those for the ECERS-E. In fact, all classrooms were on average assessed as reaching the minimal level on the ECERS-R but were inadequate on the ECERS-E (below 3). This finding is consistent with the finding of a very small-scale (unpublished) study of Chilean pre-school and first-grade classrooms of municipal schools, in which the ECERS-E scores were significantly

lower than the ECERS-R scores and all centres were rated in the inadequate range on the ECERS-E (cited in Villalón *et al*, 2002).

The analysis of the average scores for different subscales also presents a range of scenarios. In all classrooms, the 'interaction' subscale obtained the highest scores and most classrooms are assessed as in the 'good' range or even as being 'excellent' (Temuco). This is remarkable but not surprising taking into account the warm relationships observed among educators and children and the well-managed atmospheres observed in the classrooms. In fact, for this subscale, all classrooms achieved 'good' to 'excellent' scores on all items, except for the *pre-kinder* and *kinder* classrooms in Santiago, which had an inadequate level ('1') on the 'supervision of gross motor activities' item, because children were left unsupervised in the outdoor patio during recess periods.

The educators generally ensured personal care routines but this subscale only reached the minimal level because of the inadequate hand-washing practice in many classrooms (Arica and both classrooms in Santiago). On the other hand, in the Temuco *pre-kinder* classroom parents were not allowed to bring children into the classroom but saw their children off at the entrance of the classroom building, which the educator explained to me as a way to encourage children's independence and self-care (e.g. hanging their coats and backpacks, submitting homework to teachers, etc.).

With respect to the 'programme structure' subscale, except for the Arica *pre-kinder* classroom, the 'schedule' item for all classrooms was assessed as inadequate, mainly due to the shortage of the time. Educators were sometimes observed to struggle with the time pressure, not only because of the short duration of the half-day class but also due to the late arrival of children and the number of activities planned. As a result, outdoor free play appeared to be the activity that tended to be omitted. On the other hand, while in all classrooms there was a period for free indoor play (during which children chose toys and materials and played alone or with classmates usually sitting at the tables), this activity was used mainly as a waiting time while other children arrived. Educators rarely participated in or directed these play activities because they were busy preparing the next activities, checking children's homework or planning for the next weeks. In fact, it was only the educator of the Arica *pre-kinder* classroom who sometimes sat together with children during the free indoor

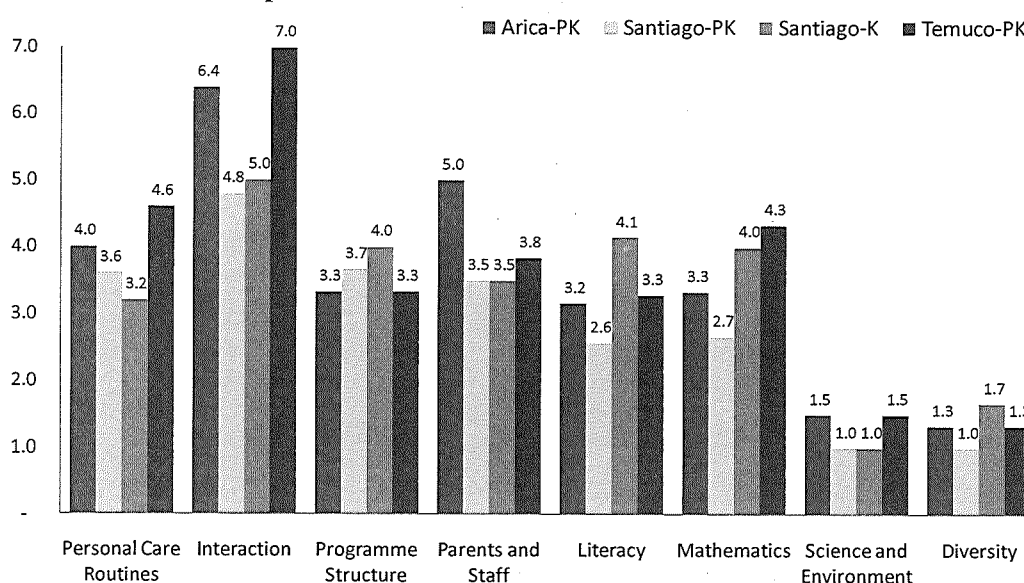
play time and played with them, while both she and the educator of the Temuco *pre-kinder* classroom supervised and played with children during the outdoor play time. The 'group time' item of this subscale needs a caveat: while this item was assessed as reaching the 'minimal' level on average, the emphasis was on 'individual' rather than 'small groups' (e.g. 'Some play activities done in small groups or individually'). In fact, small group activities rarely occurred in the classrooms observed, and educators tended to lead whole-class activities and then work individually with children (although the whole class was sometimes as small as 10 children in the Arica *pre-kinder* classroom).

The 'staff interaction and cooperation' of the 'parents and staff' subscale was assessed very positively in all schools, ranging from 'good' in most schools to 'excellent' in Arica. The educators were co-operative and supportive of one another, and also with classroom assistants, who played important supportive roles particularly in helping the educators manage large groups of children. The educators seemed to know children in other classes and had meetings for planning and discussions, although this was limited during the school year due to the time constraints (because they worked only half a day). In Arica, the *kinder* and *pre-kinder* classroom educators carried out some of classroom activities together (e.g. free outdoor play, gross motor activities and field trips). As for the 'opportunities for professional growth' item, most educators received in-service training provided by the Ministry, local authorities or universities. Only the educator of the Temuco classroom informed me that the educators in this school had had no in-service training opportunities, and this was confirmed by other educators in the school. In fact, they informed me that they received no training on the new early childhood education curriculum, although the *pre-kinder* educator of this case study had the pre-service training (university education) using the new curriculum.

The most notable and worrisome finding at the subscale level is that in all classrooms, the 'science and environment' and 'diversity' subscales were assessed as inadequate. The lack of learning materials and activities in science and environment was noticeable, compared to the time spent on literacy and mathematics activities, despite the fact that 'living things and their surrounding' is one of the eight 'learning nuclei' of the new curriculum. The Temuco classroom was observed to be lacking learning materials normally found in preschools, and there were very few toys,

children's books and other learning materials. Moreover, during the observation periods, adults rarely read to children, except the *kinder* class in Santiago, which had a visit to the school library and the librarian read a book to the children and discussed the story with them. These findings coincide with Herrera et al.'s results of the application of the original 1980 ECERS that was 'coincident with the perception that the Chilean Ministry of Education has in relation to this educational level: children are happy at preschool but learning is poor' (Herrera *et al*, 2005, pp. 25-26). Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of each classroom's average subscale scores.

**Figure 1 Summary of the average scores of the ECERS-E and the partial ECERS-R per subscale**



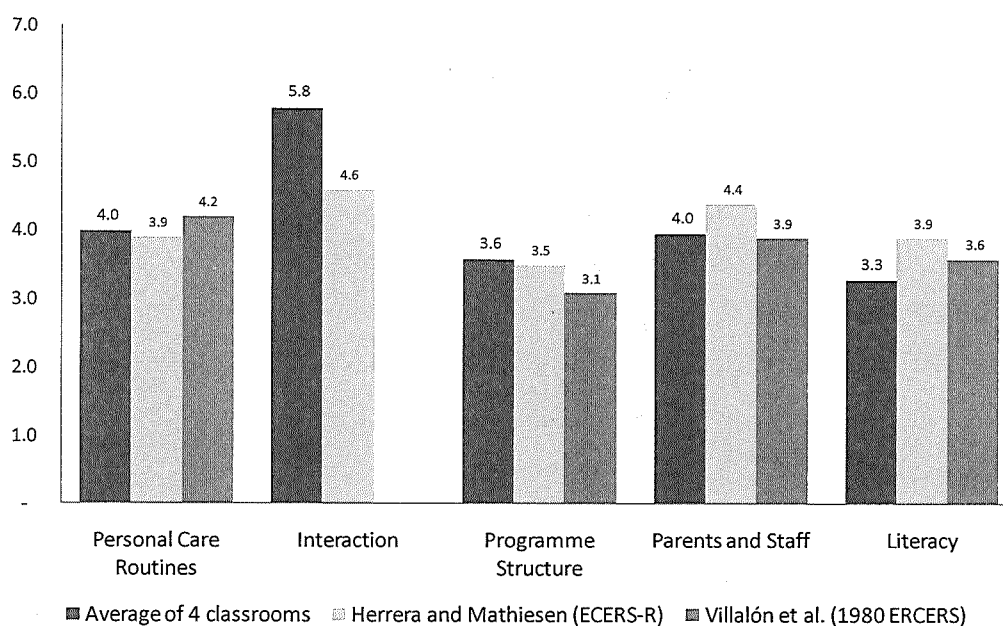
It is useful to compare these findings with the two studies in which the ECERS was applied to preschools in Chile. The study by Villalón et al. (2002) assessed 120 centres of different programme types randomly selected from two regions (the Metropolitan Region and Region X of Bio-Bio), using the original 1980 version of the ECERS, while Herreira and Mathiesen (2007), for their unpublished study commissioned by the Ministry of Education, applied the ECERS-R to some 80 preschools in Region X. In personal communications, these authors informed me that to their knowledge there was no other study in Chile using the ECERS-R and that the ECERS-E has not been used in the Chilean context to date. This comparison is therefore approximate, because the structure and content of the original ECERS are different from those of the ECERS-R, and the subscales of the ECERS-E are not



included (except Language/Reasoning for the original ECERS and the ECERS-R, which can be treated as equivalent to the 'Literacy' subscale).

Figure 2 indicates that the subscales 'personal care routines', 'programme structure' ('social development' in the original ECERS), 'parents and staff' ('adults' in the original ECERS) and 'literacy' in the three studies are all found to be reaching the 'minimal' level of quality. On the other hand, the 'interaction' subscale scored the highest both in my assessment of the four classrooms and Herrera et al.'s study, while the average of the four classrooms I observed reached a higher, 'good' level of quality (there is no equivalent subscale in the original ECERS). In fact, Herrera et al. (2005), who measured the process quality of preschools using the Infant and toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), ECERS and School Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS), concluded that good interactions between students and educators as well as among children are considered important, in addition to children's basic needs; however, learning is poor in the classrooms observed. This comparison suggests that the classrooms I observed are somewhat typical preschools in Chile.

**Figure 2 Comparison of the average ECERS scores of the 4 classrooms with those of Herreira and Mathiesen (2007) and Villalón et al. (2002)**



Given the focus of this research, the 'diversity' subscale is of particular importance, not only because it is crucial from the perspective of inclusive education but also

because of its relationship with learners' outcome, as demonstrated by the REPEY study. In this research, all four classrooms scored the inadequate level on this subscale of the ECERS-E, ranging from 1.0 to 1.7 on this subscale. Even acknowledging that the sites I visited were not such multiracial/multicultural cosmopolitans as found in England, the absence of the 'evidence of ethnic diversity in society or the wider world' was undeniable. Nonetheless, during my field visits, there was some evidence of discussions of the indigenous cultures in Arica as part of the discussion on Chile's heritage, and in the Temuco classroom, some labelled pictures were in Mapudungun (spoken by the Mapuche). In Santiago classrooms, no activity was observed to aim at promoting cultural or racial equality and awareness. In the study of Villalón et al. (and Herrera et al., which used the same data but only the sample from Region X of Bio-Bio), the item on 'cultural awareness' in the 'social development' subscale of the original ECERS was not considered because it obtained a mean of '1' and did not discriminate. On the other hand, in Herreira and Mathiesen's study (2007), the item 'promoting acceptance and of diversity' in the 'activities' subscale of the ECERS-R scored the lowest of all items (1.6), again consistent with the results obtained in my research.

With respect to the item 'Planning for individual learning needs', all classrooms were assessed with the lowest level of the ECERS-E ('1'), indicating that there is little or no curricular differentiation for individual or groups of children. When I asked some of the educators if there is any curricular differentiation for children, they told me that they sometimes give homework with different levels of difficulty or they provide extra support for children with more needs; this was however not observed in the classroom activities during my observation period. During my visits, there was no specialist or assistant who worked with individual children in the classroom. While educators kept records of individual children's progress and they were very aware of each child's family environment, personality, weaknesses and strengths, all children in the classroom were offered the same range of materials and activities and expected to complete the same tasks.

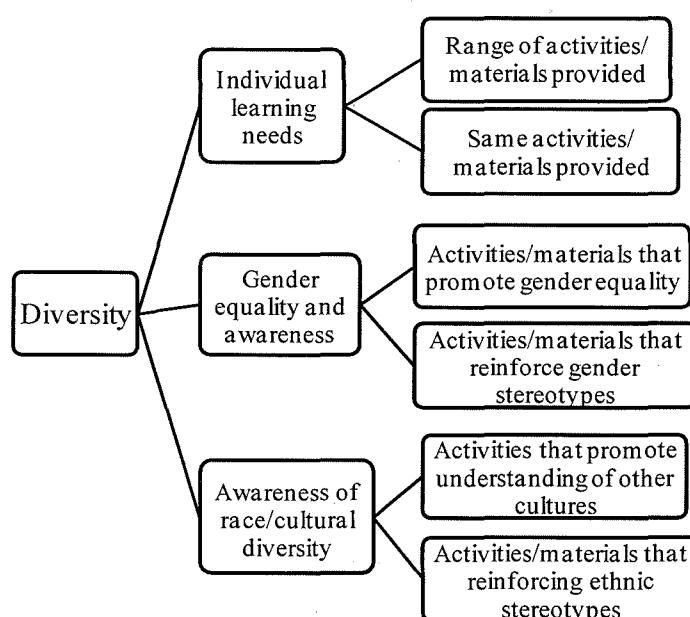
## **6.2 Observation of Pedagogical Practice**

In line with the definition of inclusive education discussed in the Chapter 3, an inclusive and equitable pedagogy involves not only the promotion of gender equality and cultural diversity through content integration and prejudice reduction but also

understanding the learners' learning styles based on their individual and sociocultural characteristics and modifying the teaching practice accordingly.

Following the items used in the diversity subscale of the ECERS-E, the observation notes were analysed first to see whether classroom activities or materials addressed individual learning needs, whether they promoted gender equality or reinforced gender stereotypes and whether they promoted the awareness of race/cultural diversity or reinforced ethnic stereotypes (Figure 3).

**Figure 3 Classroom observation: 'Diversity' dimension**

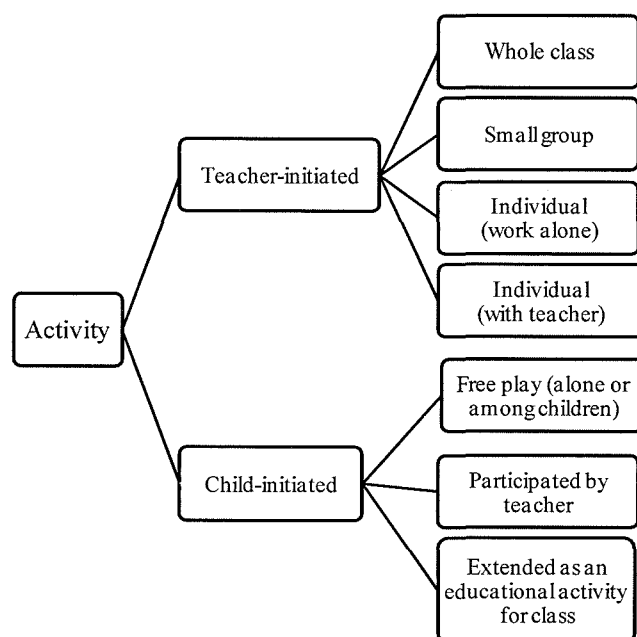


#### Addressing individual learning needs

Given that the item on planning for individual learning needs was assessed as inadequate for all classrooms assessed with the ECERS-E, it is no surprise that all children in the six classrooms observed were given the same range of materials and activities in all teacher-initiated activities. In addition to the variety of activities and materials used, this aspect of diversity needed a further analysis of how each activity was structured in terms of who initiated the activity and how the educator participated in it (Figure 4). I did not observe in any of the six classrooms differentiated materials or activities introduced by the educators, although children were certainly free to choose toys and materials during free play periods. In all classes, educators typically addressed the whole class, reading or telling a story, leading songs or introducing a new activity, and children were then given activity

materials, such as activity sheets, workbooks or coloured tissue, to work individually at the table.

**Figure 4 Classroom observation: ‘Activity Structure’ dimension**



However, educators did work with children individually, in order to ensure that they understood the concepts introduced (e.g. numbers, letters, new words). For example, Irena (Arica) during an activity on numbers first discussed the concept of counting with the whole class sitting in a semi-circle (‘Why do we count?’ ‘What do we count?’) and then she showed number cards 1 to 3 to the children, asking them to name the numbers and show them with their fingers. Next she showed one of the number cards to each child and asked him/her to pick up from a basket the equal number of bottle caps. Mariana (Temuco) and Sylvia (Santiago) often asked children review questions one by one when the children submitted the finished task to them. Olga (Santiago) also monitored children’s individual task to practice writing the number ‘2’ and when they finished, she asked each to write another ‘2’ in front of her. One interesting technique used by Irena (Arica) was a ‘self-evaluation’ of the individual work in which each child was asked to present what he/she had done in front of others. For example, in learning the concept ‘independence’ and ‘to be independent’ at the occasion of Chile’s independence anniversary, Irena first discussed the topic in the whole group, then asked each child what he/she could do independently (or alone), followed by an individual activity to draw what they could

do independently. Irena gathered children again in a semi-circle and asked each child to present to the others what they had drawn.

One activity Mariana organised daily during the week was a poster presentation (*disertación del compañero*), in which a child presented to the rest of the class a poster prepared with his/her family at home about a specific topic on the theme of the month (*Fiestas Patrias*), such as typical food of Chile or the national emblem. Mariana would encourage and patiently wait for the presenters to speak but they were mostly too shy to stand and speak out in front of other children. Mariana normally ended up asking them what each of the photos or drawings was, and then asked the presenters to ask questions to the class. The families of the presenters were also asked to prepare a small souvenir of the poster presentations, such as a small Chilean flag or paper ornament in a shape of the national flower. Although this was a teacher-initiated activity, it was based on the child's work and an opportunity for the educator to work one-to-one with the child.

Working with individual children during the whole-class activity was a challenge particularly in large classrooms, such as Josefina's class with 32 children, because the rest of the class often had to wait and became restless and noisy. This was also the case for individual activities, in which some children finished their assignments (e.g. colouring a worksheet, writing numbers, artwork), while others took much longer, sometimes 20 or 30 minutes longer. Mariana (Temuco), for example, told me that such different rhythms of individual work delayed the whole class and she sometimes could not finish all the activities planned for the day. In most classrooms, children who finished early were expected to wait at the table, though sometimes they were allowed to play quietly with toys while waiting. In Temuco, it was interesting to note that whereas Mariana asked children to sit and wait quietly –this was nearly impossible as children became restless–, Loreto let the children who finished early leave the classroom to play freely in the indoor play space under her assistant's supervision. This helped the remaining children to continue working quietly and at the same time the others could be engaged in other activities.

Loreto, an experienced educator of nearly 30 years, led the class with a much faster pace than the other educators, filling the transitions between activities with singing or quick games, and children rarely spent time waiting for others children to finish. Her class might be considered to be less 'child-centred' in the sense that she led all

activities in a didactic manner, except the free play time at the beginning of the day; however, she conducted a variety of activities and the children were constantly occupied and engaged. The day I observed the class was the last day of the month's project on *Fiestas Patrias*, and she explained to the children that they would do an assessment. The first assessment was in a whole group: the children passed around a small teddy bear to music and when Loreto stopped the music, the child who held the teddy had to respond to Loreto's question ('What is the name of the country where we live?' 'What is the name of our national dance?' 'What is the name of the president of our country?', etc.). After some ten (all closed) questions, she conducted an individual written test. She first sent the boys with her assistant to play in the indoor play space, and the girls were seated separately from each other and received a test sheet with six multiple-choice questions. After asking the girls to write down their names and the date, Loreto read each question and the girls chose the illustration corresponding to the answer (national flag, flower, etc.). When finished, the girls went out to play and the boys came in to sit the test. The boys went through the same process, and those who finished were sent out to play. One boy was left in the classroom and struggled for some time. In the end, Loreto read him the questions and the boy answered verbally.

Another example of educators working with individual children during a whole-class activity was Sylvia (Santiago) asking one girl and one boy to count the number of girls and boys, respectively, during the morning routine of taking attendance. She told me that she asked some children who had a problem with the number sequence, and this was an opportunity to support them:

*[Sylvia asks Girl S1 to count girls.]*

Sylvia (to other children): please be quiet, so that Girl S1 won't forget

*[Girl S1 starts counting girls, walking around the room. When she has counted the last girl, saying 'six'.]*

Sylvia: And with you?

Girl S1: 'Seven!'

Sylvia: 'Good, let us all count 7'

*[Sylvia and all children counts girls, '1, 2, 3...7!'.]*

S: Girl S1, go and write 7 [on the board].

S: She has to write by herself.

*[Girl S1 writes slowly '7' on the attendance board on the wall. Sylvia asks Boy S2 to count the number of boys.]*

Boy S2: 1,2,3 ... and 15!

Sylvia: And with you?

Boy S2: Sixteen!

*[Sylvia asks Boy S2 to write down '16' on the attendance board. She asks Boy S4 to count the total number of children.]*

Boy S4: 1, 2, 3...16 *[He pauses]*.

Sylvia: Boy S4 got confused, because you [other children] intervened. Boy S4 was right. You have to respond when the Auntie asks for it.

*[Boy S4 counts up to 23 with Sylvia's help.]*

Working in small groups was not common in any of the six classrooms. Although children were grouped at tables (except Irina's class which was normally attended by less than 10 children), they were not used for group work. The educators sometimes changed seating when some children become distracted or disruptive. Mariana had a small table with four seats and a larger block of tables where the rest of children sat. Although children chose where to sit as they arrived, she sometimes changed the seating of one or two children, and she had at the small table one child who tended to work well and help others. Nonetheless, there were two activities on which children worked in small groups. First, in Mariana's class the children were divided into groups of three children, so that each group decorated a region of Chile's map with a different colour of rolled-up tissue paper. This was an opportunity for children to co-operate toward the same goal of colouring a region. Another group work was led by Olga (Santiago) for a counting activity, in which each table was given a die and a basket of small blocks, and each child a small piece of paper and a plastic cup. Each child was to throw the die, write down the number of the die on the piece of paper and put it in the cup together with the same number of blocks. The children at the same table were to help each other. This group activity was concluded with Olga calling each child to the front and verifying the number written and the number of blocks. These group activities closely monitored by educators seemed helpful in motivating children in helping each other.

#### Gender equality and awareness

In terms of gender equality, one noticeable practice at both classrooms in Arica during the morning greeting routine was that educators greeted students with, 'good morning, boys and girls [*niños y niñas*]' instead of 'good morning [or afternoon], children' as practiced in other schools. In the Spanish language, a group of male children are addressed *niños* (singular *niño*) and a group of female children *niñas* (singular *niña*). However, *niños* is normally used to address a mixed-sex group 'children', which can be considered sexist and a more gender-sensitive '*niños y*

*niñas*' is preferred. Since this practice was observed on all days I observed the two classrooms in Arica, it was probably consciously practiced in this school. Another practice of gender equality was observed when Mariana (Temuco) distributed tasks (e.g. distribution of materials, hand soap) during the morning routine, she assigned tasks to equal numbers of boys and girls (e.g. the first task to a girl, the next to a boy).

Moreover, there were two instances in which Josefina in Temuco used an activity or children's cues to reinforce the concept of gender equality. First, when she was projecting photos about the lifestyle of the Aymara people, she stopped to tell children, 'you see all family works. The lady works and also helps the shepherd', to emphasise that it was not only men who work outside the home. Second, during the music class, she asked children with an exaggerated gesture of swinging a conductor's baton, 'how do you call a gentleman who does this?' A few children responded, '*director de la música*' (male music conductor), but another child said, 'No, *directora de la música*' (female music conductor) because it was Josefina (female) who was swinging a baton. Josefina immediately and emphatically said, 'Ah! You are right. Yes, I'm the *directora de la música*'.

There was one activity which seemed to reinforce gender stereotypes although this was not led by the educator. Mariana in Temuco received three high school students who led an activity with children without her interference. In distributing colouring sheets with drawings from the American cartoon *The Backyardigans*, the students gave the male moose 'Tyrone' only to boys and the female hippopotamus 'Tasha' only to girls. Not only was the educational intention of colouring these drawings unclear, this seemed inappropriate from a gender equality perspective. Incidentally, one girl who finished colouring her Tasha asked one of the students for the next one: when the latter tried to give her another Tasha, the girl told him, 'That, I finished, I want Tyrone!'

On her part, Sylvia in Santiago was heard to say a few things that could be interpreted as reinforcing gender stereotypes. In discussing with the children what they would eat during the *Fiestas Patrias*, she asked, 'mum prepares...[*empanada*]', attributing cooking to mothers only. Moreover, when one girl came dressed in a traditional *huasita* (little country girl) costume, she called other children's attention:

Sylvia: how does she look?



Children [in unison]: Pretty!

Sylvia: She looks like a doll, doesn't she?

Several children: No! *Huasita*!

Although it is highly unlikely that Sylvia meant to reinforce gender stereotyping, her statements could be interpreted as portraying a girl as a passive, diminutive figure.

### Cultural diversity

In terms of raising children's awareness of cultural diversity, the nucleus 'human groups, their lifestyles and relevant events' lists as the first expected learning outcome 'appreciate his/her personal and family life as well as different lifestyles, identifying customs, traditions and significant past and present events'. During the classroom observation, two types of relevant activities were identified: first, the educators talked about, presented or discussed with children the characteristics of some of the indigenous groups in Chile as part of the *Fiestas Patrias* activities, and second, the educators took advantage of my presence to expose children to foreign cultures.

Both classrooms in Arica had a hand-made poster with paper figures of couples from the three main indigenous groups in traditional costumes (Aymara, Mapuche and Rapa Nui) and carried out specific activities to discuss the Aymara from the region. Josefina read to the children and discussed a text written on a flipchart titled 'Learning the Roots of my Country'.

...many years ago other people, who are our original people, lived. They were numerous and lived across the country. Currently there are three ethnicities that maintain a large population; they are the Aymara, who live in the north of Chile, the Rapa Nui, who live in Easter Island, located between Antofagasta and La Serena, and the Mapuche who live in the south of Chile, namely, in the Araucanía zone. The Aymara, the Rapa Nui and the Mapuche want to tell us about their customs, language, food, dance, tradition and clothing. They are also Chilean and celebrate the independence of Chile [*my translation*].

On the same day, Josefina presented photos about the Aymara's lifestyle using PowerPoint, followed by a discussion and a quiz. In concluding the activity, she asked children if they liked 'the story of the Aymara friends', to which children responded 'Yes!' in unison. She also played the Aymara folklore music and children danced to it. Irena's class also discussed the tradition of the Aymara, such as housing

and clothing on the same day, and on the following day both classes visited the anthropological museum to see the artefacts and traditions of the region.

In the classroom where Mariana and Loreto worked, drawings of young couples of different ethnic groups of Chile were posted as well as colourful numbers from 1 to 10 with their transcription in Mapudungun (language of the Mapuche). While specific activities on ethnic groups did not take place during my visit, Mariana informed me that they had worked on a project on the Mapuche culture early in the year. In Santiago, there was no visible display of other cultures in the two classrooms, and there was only once instance during my visit, in which an indigenous group was mentioned. When Sylvia introduced a song '*Mi bandera chilena* [My Chilean Flag]', she asked several questions about the lyrics, and one of them was about the colours of the national flag:

Sylvia: What does the red represent?

[*No answer from children*]

Sylvia: 'The blood of the Mapuche. Our Mapuche, they are part of us'.

With respect to the second type of activity, Irena (Arica) and Mariana (Temuco) unexpectedly 'used' me as a resource for children to learn about foreign cultures. Irena was showing the children the location of Chile and Spain on a globe when the class was discussing the independence of Chile, and she asked me where I lived. I told her that I lived in France. She pointed to France next to Spain to show to the children and then asked me to say some words in French (e.g. 'Good morning', 'good night', 'dad', 'mum') for children to repeat. On another day, she invited children to sing a song of colours in English and then asked me to say the names of colours in French; she then let the children repeat the names of colours in English and French, distinguishing them carefully.

Mariana planned a special activity after she saw a couple of children asking me to write their names in Japanese. At the beginning of my last day at the school, she asked me if I could write down all children's names in Japanese toward the end of the class. Later on in the day, I left the classroom to meet the pedagogical supervisor and when I came back to the classroom, Mariana had written down on the whiteboard four questions she discussed with children (In which city were you born? How do you write [*your name*] in Japanese? In which city do you live? In which country do you live?). She asked volunteers to ask me the questions one by one,

which I answered. Then each child received a small piece of paper with his/her name on and came to me to have it written in Japanese. After all the names were written, the class went to the patio and children received colour chalk so they could copy their names in the Roman alphabet and Japanese on the concrete floor. Children had a great time, writing, drawing and commenting on each other's writing. Although this activity crossed the line for my non-participatory observation, it was an excellent example of using an available resource and combining different learning nuclei, including verbal language (both oral and written), artistic language and human groups.

The examples given above address mostly the content integration of 'other' cultures, including those of indigenous groups from the schools' regions (Arica and Temuco), and such content integration was rarely observed in Santiago. In fact, the Chilean curricular bases encourage educators to 'integrate elements (visual, audio and tactile) from other cultural spheres –national, Latin America and other continents– so as to allow children to broaden their vision of the world' (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 102, my translation). Moreover, the same document highlights, as the first item of the general planning criteria, the 'contextualisation and diversification', which:

imply that planning should be adapted to the needs, strengths and characteristics of children, their families and community which they are part of...Among others, it is essential to consider children's prior assessments and reports of diverse types, such as those related to social and cultural characteristics of the education community, children's health and interests (Op. cit. p. 89),

All educators observed were aware of children's family backgrounds and individual knowledge levels. However, the extent to which they adjusted learning materials based on their knowledge of children's individual and sociocultural characteristics seemed limited during the observation.

### Pedagogical interactions

As mentioned in the Section 5.3, using the categories in the REPEY study as the starting point, the adults' pedagogical interactions during the classroom observations were assigned to two major categories –mainly cognitive or mainly social interactions– and these categories were further divided into sub-categories as shown in the Figure 5. The three codes highlighted in the Figure 5 (meta-cognition, delegated to help other children and reinforcement) were then added, as they seemed

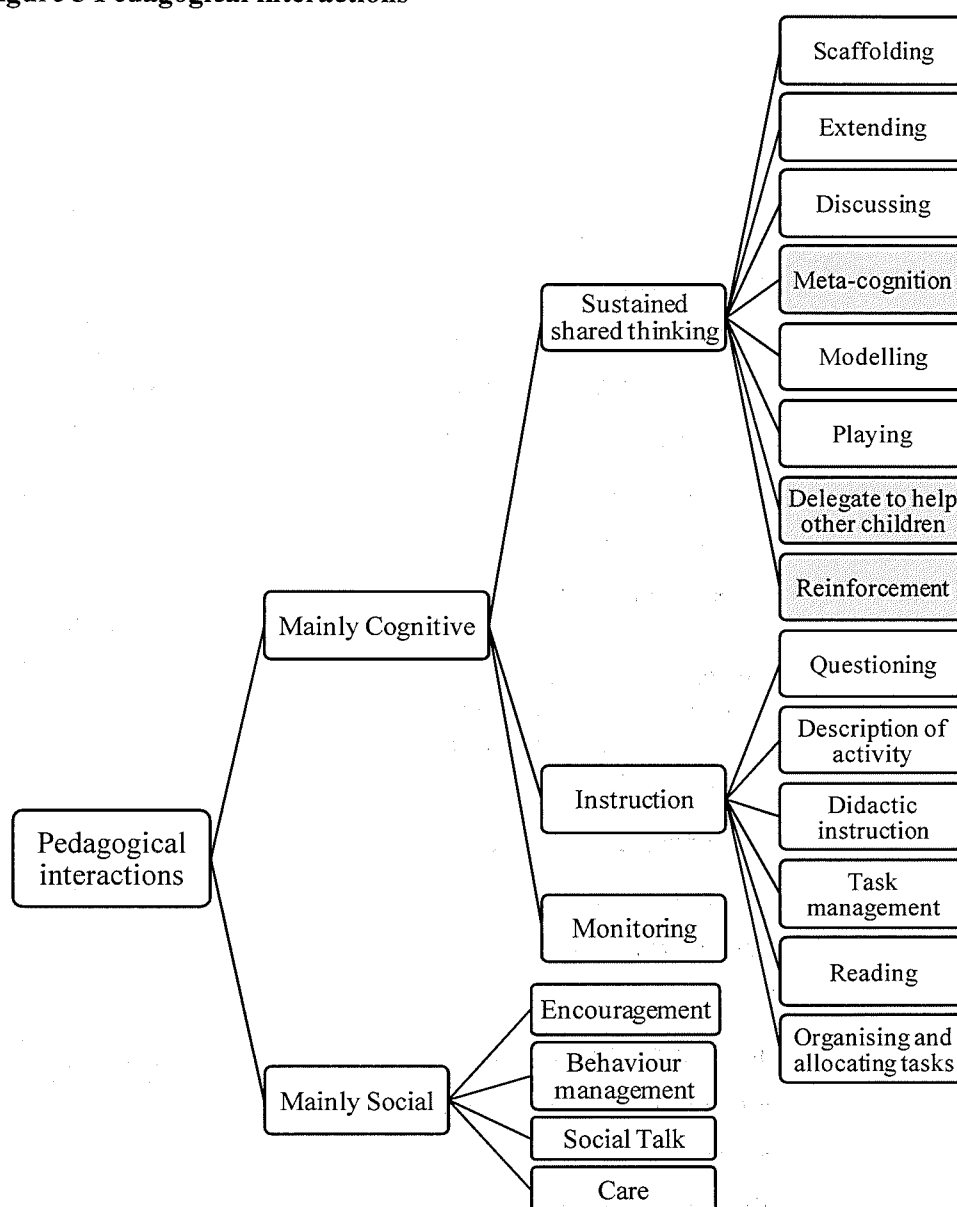
to be important indications of educators' engagement with children's current levels of knowledge, and for this reason, they are placed under the sub-category 'Sustained shared thinking'.

A pedagogical interaction was coded 'mega-cognition' when an educator led the child to reflect on his/her own learning, by asking what he/she remembers or had learned or done in an educational activity and how they solved the problem (e.g. in an addition exercise) or behaved (e.g. self-/peer-evaluation of behaviour). Meta-cognition is highlighted as one of the abilities of successful lifelong learners, giving learners greater independence in their learning. And as a result, learners becoming more aware of different levels of difficulty of materials or different learning strategies, question themselves whether they have understood the materials and know when it is appropriate to seek help from teachers (Hargreaves, 2005).

By meta-cognition we mean the capacity to monitor, evaluate, control and change how one thinks and learns. In less formal terms, learning to learn means reflecting on one's learning and intentionally applying the results of one's reflection to further learning (Ibid. p. 7).

The code 'delegated to help other children' was used when an educator asked a child to help another child who cannot achieve a certain task by him/herself. From the perspective of the child who benefited from a peer's help, it can be considered 'scaffolding', but in this case, the educator, recognising the helper's knowledge or ability, delegates him/her to help another child. It did not happen often, but it was considered a unique and useful interaction. Finally, the code 'reinforcement' was used when the educator knew that the child had the knowledge to do a certain task but asked for help: the educator reminded him/her that he/she could do without help.

**Figure 5 Pedagogical interactions**



This data analysis focuses on the two sub-categories –sustained shared interaction and instruction (or ‘direct teaching’ in the REPEY)– within the category of mainly cognitive pedagogical interactions, since the previous research and the results of the ECERS-R and ECERS-E (see Section 6.1) indicated that educators and children had excellent social-emotional interactions but classroom activities were limited in their conduciveness to learning.

Table 5 below illustrates how the indicated pedagogical interactions under the sub-category ‘instruction’ were observed for each of the six educators. The quantification of episodes is not possible due to the observation method and different observation

time for each classroom; nonetheless, a single-tick (✓) is given when a certain interaction was observed only once or twice, while a double-tick (✓✓) is given when three or more episodes were observed.

Two noticeable differences among the educators are highlighted: first, reading was a relatively rare activity and observed only once in Josefina's class and twice in Mariana's and Sylvia's classes. Second, all educators often asked children questions, but, except Irena, educators tended to ask closed questions that solicited 'correct' answers or specific words. For example, the following exchange from Loreto's class demonstrates this observation:

*[The class is going to make traditional sweets 'pajaritos' and Loreto (L) sifts flour in front of children.]*

L: Why do you think we have to sift the flour? *[Open question]*

Children: *[No answer.]*

L shows inside of a sifter and says, 'what remained here?' *[Closed question]*

Children: 'Little balls'.

*[L explains that these little balls make the pajaritos hard.]*

....

*[L lets one girl grate an orange but takes over because it is taking a long time.]*

L: 'How do you call this thing that I am using?' *[Closed question]*

A few children: 'Spoon'.

L: 'No, not that'.

One boy: 'Grater'.

L: 'Very good'.

*[L mixes milk and start massaging the dough.]*

L: what produces milk? *[Closed question]*

Children: Cow!

L: What is the name of the baby of a cow?' *[Closed question]*

Children: Calf!

Irena, on the other hand, was observed asking several open-ended questions as seen in the following two examples:

*[Irena (R) sits in front of children seated in a semi-circle. The class will have a field trip to a local anthropological museum. Following the daily morning song and greeting,]*

R: Today we are happy because we are going out for a visit. What are we going to see in the museum? *[Open question]*

Several children: Mummies!

Girl R1: Clothes.

R: What kind of clothes? *[Open question]*

Girl R1: Street clothes.

R: OK.

*[R gets up and brings a piece of paper and a pen to note what children say.]*

R: What else do they have in the museum? *[Open question]*

*[R asks children to raise hands and asks each child to name only one. Children mention 'stone house', 'flowers', 'dinosaurs' bones', etc.]*

*[Irena (R) brings a basket of small plastic caps for counting and asks children to put chairs against the wall and sit on the floor.]*

R: 'We are learning numbers. Do you remember the song of numbers?'

*[Irena and Children sing a song about counting.]*

R: 'Why do we need to count? Do we need to know how to count? *[Open question]*

Children: 'For gifts' 'To sell'

R: 'What do we need to count?' *[Open question]*

Children: 'honey jars', 'carrots', 'Count rabbits to give carrots'.

**Table 5 Cognitive pedagogical interactions: episodes of 'instruction'**

Educator	Class	Obsv time (hrs)	Instruction						
			Description of activity	Didactic instruction	Organising/ allocating tasks	Questioning		Reading	Task management
						Closed	Open		
Irena	Arica-PK	14	√√	√√	√√	√√	√√		√√
Josefina	Arica-K	5	√√	√√	√	√√	√	√	√√
Olga	Santiago-PK	16	√√	√√	√√	√√	√		√√
Sylvia	Santiago-K	15	√√	√√	√√	√√	√	√	√√
Mariana	Temuco-PK	17	√√	√	√√	√√	√	√	√√
Loreto	Temuco-K	4	√√	√√	√√	√√	√		√√

Similar to the above, Table 6 below indicates the observed episodes of the pedagogical interactions under the sub-category 'sustained shared thinking' (see examples of these interactions in Appendix 8). Compared to the episodes of interactions under 'instruction', many interactions under this category were relatively uncommon: for example, 'delegation to help other children', 'discussing', 'extending' 'reinforcement' and scaffolding' were observed for half or less than half of the educators. Differences among educators were also more noticeable: while I observed most of these pedagogical interactions for Mariana, Irena and Sylvia, very few interactions were observed for Olga and the other two educators whose observation times were short (Josefina and Loreto). Given the important association between sustained shared thinking and educational outcomes evidenced in the REPEY study (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009; Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, 2002), each of these eight interactions are analysed here.

**Table 6 Cognitive pedagogical interactions: episodes of ‘sustained shared thinking’**

Educator	Class	Obsv time (hrs)	Sustained Shared Thinking							
			Delegate to help other children	Discussing	Extending	Meta-cognition	Modelling	Playing	Reinforce-ment	Scaffolding
Irena	Arica-PK	14		√√	√	√√	√	√		√
Josefina	Arica-K	5				√		√		
Olga	Santiago-PK	16					√√		√√	
Sylvia	Santiago-K	15	√	√	√	√√	√			√
Mariana	Temuco-PK	17	√	√√	√	√√	√√	√		
Loreto	Temuco-K	4				√	√	√		

The ‘delegation to help other children’ was observed only in two episodes. First, when Sylvia’s students were making chains with strips of coloured paper for a *Fiesta Patria* decoration, two girls came to her desk and told her that Girl S4 was not doing the chain right (she was connecting the tips of a strip into a tear shape rather than a ring). Sylvia asked the two girls to show Girl S4 how to do because ‘she is confused’, and the two girls went to help Girl S4. Similarly, in Mariana’s class when Boy M2 did not remember the name of a colour (yellow) and made a mistake, Mariana asked Boy M2 to ‘choose a friend to help’ instead of correcting him or having another child correct him. These episodes were brief but useful in encouraging co-operation and avoiding embarrassment for the child who made a mistake.

It is no surprise that ‘discussing’ or a prolonged discussion between the educator and a child was observed most frequently for Irena who often asked children open-ended questions. It may have been easier for her to have a discussion because her class size was small and each child could take time to speak. She was observed to let a conversation flow when a child brought up an idea as seen in the following example:

*[The class is seated in a semi-circle in front of Irena (I) for the morning greeting routine. The class sings three songs and the last song is about Little Red Riding Hood].*

Boy R2: Does the wolf kill other animals?

R: Yes, sometimes.

Boy R3: Animals are not bad, they are cute.

Girl R1: My parents put a rabbit in a cage

R: Yes, so that it won’t escape.

R: What other animals are there?

*[and children speak about different animals: dogs, fish, sharks, etc.]*

Irena also used the time before the museum visit to discuss what children expected to see at a museum, and after the visit, she discussed with children what they liked,



what they found at the museum, whether they saw what they had expected, how they behaved during the trip and where they would like to visit next.

Mariana conducted daily peer-evaluation sessions during which children discussed how each child behaved (well, more or less, or badly) and why they thought so. While I was away from the classroom, she discussed with children what questions they would like to ask me, and upon my return some children posed me the questions.

‘Extending’ is ‘generally a quicker interaction when the practitioner makes a suggestion to allow the child to see other possibilities in the activity in which s/he is taking part’ (Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, 2002, p. 144). This interaction rarely took place in the classrooms observed. One example, however, can be the sum exercise from Sylvia’s class:

*[A boy and a girl counted the numbers of boys and girls, respectively]*

S: Are there more boys or girls today?

Children: Boys!

S: How many boys have come?

Children: 11!

S: How many girls have come?

Children: 7!

*[She writes down on the whiteboard:  $11 + o o o o o o = \square$ ]*

S: How many are there in total?

Boy S7: 18.

S: How did you do, Boy S7?

Boy S7: With the number tape [on the table]

S: You added 7 to 11.

S: Are there other ways of doing it to reach 18?

One boy: With hands.

S: With hands. Yes.

Boy S3: Add. Add 10 and then 1.

Girl S2: Remove 3 and then remove 2.

S: You confuse me.

Boy S4: With coins. 11 coins drop and 7 more coins drop and count all the coins on the table.

S: ‘Very good’.

The code ‘meta-cognition’ was observed for all educators except Olga (Santiago-PK), and the most common approach was to ask children what they remembered from the story, video or visit they had just experienced. For example, Mariana organized poster presentations by children on a daily basis, and after the presentation she often asked the class ‘what did you learn from the presentation of [name]?’ Sometimes, such memory question can be extended to a review exercise as in the following example from Sylvia’s class:

S: What have we done for the *Fiestas Patrias*?  
 One child: To colour *copihue* [national flower].  
 S: Girl S2?  
*[Someone else speaks.]*  
 S: Girl S2?  
*[No response from Girl S2]*  
 S: Girl S1, help her.  
 Girl S1: We did Chilean flags  
 Boy S4: Kites.  
 S: That's what you do at home, but we have not done it here. But on Monday, we can fly kites.  
 S: National emblem, condor, *hulmué*...What else do you remember?  
 Boy S3: We learned the poem about the Chilean flag.  
 Boy S9: We folded paper to make a Chilean flag.  
 S: What did we learn about our country? Boy S3?  
 Boy S3: Narrow and long...

Mariana was observed asking each child to recall the steps of the activity they had just completed:

*[Children coloured a Chilean flag on an A4 paper and then cut it into six pieces along the dotted lines to make a jigsaw puzzle.]*

M: Girl M5, What did you do?

Girl M5: Colouring

M: And then?

Girl M5: Cut out and paste.

M: For what?

Girl M5: For what?

M: To review the steps.

Girl M5: To make a Chilean flag.

Such a review of what they have done and how they have done it helps children think about their own learning process.

'Modelling' is a demonstration of an activity by an adult, and most educators demonstrated in front of the children so that children could follow the examples and accomplish the task themselves. For example, Mariana wrote down 'For Aunt Mami' on a piece of paper, so that the children could copy it on the card with a *copihue* drawing they were going to give me. Loreto demonstrated to the whole class how to knot a long piece of dough to make a *pajarito* biscuit, so children did it with their own dough. She showed it once again to a girl who asked her; she then unfolded the dough, so that the girl could do it by herself. Olga, on the other hand, was more 'hands-on': when helping children write a number '2', she held their hands and led the writing. When children were to roll small pieces of coloured tissue paper to be pasted on a Chilean flag with their fingers, Olga stood behind them and put her

arms around their shoulders to show them how to roll the paper in front of their eyes. She even put Boy O2, who would not speak in school and obviously had an attention deficit and tended to roam around the room, on her lap to show him how to roll tissue and make him work on the task.

It was rather surprising that 'playing' was not very commonly observed. In all classrooms, children engaged in free play as they arrived and until the classroom activities started, but, except Irena, the educators did not participate: they were busy preparing activities, organising the room or looking at homework, and in case of Sylvia, planning future activities. Irena also carried out these tasks but often sat with children at the table during the free play, engaged in social talk or sometimes played with the children. I saw her twice joining two or three girls to play a memory game, and this turned out to be educational –in addition to training of concentration and memory–, because the pictures of the cards were typical of Chile (e.g. monuments, objects and animals), which were particularly relevant to the theme of the month. The game gave Irena and children the opportunity to speak about the pictures, and Irena also reminded children of behavioural norms: 'There are rules in a game. Remember that there are rules in a game. You turn the card and not looking'. Josefina (Arica) and Mariana (Temuco) led an outdoor tag game called *el pollito* ('little chick'), in which a group of 'wolves' tried to catch 'chicks' as the latter tried to run from one end of a court to the other.

It was interesting that 'reinforcement' was observed only at Olga's class. The following three examples show that children (incidentally all boys) thought or pretended that they did not have the knowledge they actually did, and Olga reminded them that they could do it by themselves:

*[Boy O7 comes to Olga's desk, looking for his name plate to copy it under his drawings.]*

O: Boy O7, you know how to write your name by yourself.

*[Boy O7 lets go of his name plate and goes back to the table. He cuts out the drawing and writes down his name.]*

*[Boy O8 brings the drawing to show to Olga]*

O: You have to put your name.

Boy O8: I can't write my name.

*[O does not respond]*

*[Boy O8 goes back to his table and writes down his name. He then brings back the work to O]*

Boy O8: I wrote down my name. Can I go outside?

O: Yes.

*[Children are drawing 'symbols of Chile'. O is holding a boy's hand to help him draw]*

Boy O1: *[Comes to O]* What colours does the flag have?

O: You know what colours the flag has.

*[Boy O1 goes back to his seat, colours the flag and goes to patio for free outdoor play.]*

These examples indicate that Olga knew the levels of the children's knowledge and encouraged them directly or indirectly to exercise the acquired knowledge, even by using silence.

Finally, 'scaffolding' in which an educator tries to 'take the child to a higher level of knowledge than s/he would have before' through a series of questions or comments (Siraj-Blatchford *et al*, 2002, p. 144), was also one of the rarest pedagogical interactions observed, once each for Irena and Sylvia, and both were during a counting exercise:

*[After children sang the song of attendance, R calls each child's name and hands out his/her name tag.]*

R: Girl R5, count the number of the remaining name tags.

*[Girl R5 has difficulty and stops.]*

R: *[to the class]* Shall we help Girl R5?

*[Girl R5 counts up to 6 with Irena and other children while R is holding her shoulder for assurance]*

R: Girl R5, count again by yourself.

Girl R5: 1, 2, 3, ...6!

R: You see that you can do it well!

Sylvia: Let us count the number of children.

*[S asks Boy S5 to go around the room to count boys.]*

*[Boy S5 counts the number of boys, touching their heads but he gets confused. S goes right next to Boy S5]*

S: You lost concentration because others were talking. We do it again from the beginning.

S: *[to other children]* please be quiet so that Boy S5 will not lose concentration.

*[Boy S5 manages to count the boys correctly.]*

As mentioned earlier, Sylvia often asked children with a problem with the number sequence to do this daily head-counting, and this indicates her knowledge of the children's knowledge as well as conscious effort to bring it to a higher level. In both examples, the educators gave the children emotional support and saw to it that the children managed the exercise by themselves at the end. As a result, the children were able to do with the educators (and other children) what they could not do by themselves at the beginning.

### 6.3 Perceptions of Practitioners

The observation data illuminated some of inclusive and effective pedagogical practices of the six Chilean educators. In order to understand how their pedagogical work has been challenged and affected by the diversity of the classroom, it is essential to gain insight into their perceptions of the diversity within the classroom and the new curriculum. The analysis of the semi-structured interviews thus brings me closer to addressing the research questions and provides some explanations to the observed pedagogical practice.

#### Diversity in the classroom

In responding to the first question, *What do you understand by diversity in the classroom?*, the educators responded in two ways, first in terms of children's family backgrounds, particularly in the context of poverty and the family composition, and second in terms of their different rhythms of learning. The family background was repeatedly mentioned as having important influence on the child's behaviours and disposition to learning:

Irena (Arica): children come from different, how should I say, family experiences, because I have few children coming from households with [both] fathers and mothers. The majority comes from families of single working mothers, which influences their behaviour and their attitude toward the life...so some children are a little aggressive or restless, because sometimes there are no norms or rules in the family. So the type of diversity goes to that, not in relation to diversity...at least at this moment I don't have children with other, for example, nationalities.

Josefina (Arica): For me the diversity has to do with characteristics of each child, each person, each family...we are inserted in a vulnerable sector...where there exist the problems of drug addiction and alcoholism, and we have a large number of mothers who are heads of household.

Loreto (Temuco): Diversity exists everywhere...in my class, for example, the socio-cultural part is the very notable diversity this year, because some children have a little more resources, while others have extremely scarce resources. There are two children who do not have a father or a mother... The diversity in the affective part, because I have children with well-formed households as well as children raised by their grandparents or single mothers. So that is the diversity I talk about in my class.

Olga (Santiago): another difference is what comes out from home, or what children bring with them. Because they come to school for the first time, behaviours at this entry point are important.

Sylvia (Santiago): when we talk about diversity, we are talking about the personal footprints each child has...the particularities of each child, and the respect for that person, [who] has particular and social dimension.

Another individual characteristic, different rhythms and ways of learning, was also characterised as diversity in the classroom:

Mariana (Temuco): the diversity is the fact that all have different rhythms and styles of learning...some have very slow rhythms of learning, others have attention deficit and it is very difficult for them [to concentrate] and we have to work with them always...

Josefina (Arica): Not all children learn in the same way...some learn speaking, others learn playing and others, or some learn through artistic part. We need to attend that diversity as well...

Loreto (Temuco): The idea is that everyone learns, you see? [I have to] look for all possible resources, as you never find the same class. There is diversity, some learn quickly, others more slowly, and we have to respect that rhythm.

Olga (Santiago): diversity is related to the rhythms of learning. Not all children have the same rhythms of learning. It's more difficult for some than others.

Interestingly, social or collective identities, such as gender, ethnicity and nationality, were not mentioned by the educators, except Josefina (Arica) who mentioned that they had children from different ethnicities as well as children with different nationalities (Bolivian, Peruvian and Argentinean), adding that these are more 'visible diversity' and other diversities, such as special educational needs, are less visible. She said:

I do not [differentiate] children, for example, who are indigenous descendents because they have different characteristics or customs: they are involved [in the classroom] equally as the boy who lives only with his dad, or the girl whose mother is drug-addict, or the boy whose mother works all day and is never seen at home, or the boy who lives with a grandmother, or whose mother is in prison, because all these are my realities.

The challenges experienced by the educators in dealing with the diversity of the classroom were also highlighted at the two levels: one related to children's family environments, including the lack of behavioural norms at home and parental involvement in the child's learning, and the other related to children's different skill levels at the entry point. Thus children's individual characteristics were more relevant to the educators than their sociocultural backgrounds.

Irena (Arica) expressed her concern that children do not receive enough training in habits and values at home, because the training they receive at preschool is only for a few hours a day and the rest of the time is spent at home:

the fact that the child sometimes has no norms...and value formation at home affects a lot his/her conduct and behaviour at school, because they want to continue in the same line as at home. That is more than anything that kind of children who come very restless and want to do things for themselves, because at home no limits are drawn.

Mariana (Temuco), on the other hand, was concerned about the lack of parental awareness of children's needs:

The lack of preoccupation by the mother is grave, and I spoke with her a lot... and I took him to be evaluated by a [special education] educator, who told me that he had a deficit, hyper-activeness. He is hyper-active, but the mother is not even [aware] of it. So it is difficult to create parents' consciousness that children need their support, especially those who have more difficulties or those with a lower level of maturity...

With regard to children's different skill levels at the entry point, Olga (Santiago) mentioned that particularly at the pre-kinder level children have large differences in terms of knowledge of and disposition toward classroom activities and the first challenge is to 'level' them:

...you notice big differences that children have, because some children come quite motivated at home and know how to use some elements, like pencils and all kinds. But there are children who are babies, babies, so during the first semester in particular, the big challenge would be to level them. So that all learn at least work with all elements and learn how to use a pencil or draw...

Mariana (Temuco) also mentioned that children's different knowledge and abilities forced her to spend most time on the core subject areas (language and mathematics) and prevented her from working on other areas:

Here at school, as I was telling you the other day, we work most on language and mathematics. So, children have to learn at pre-kinder numbers from 0 to 10 and vowels mainly...but for me, for example, it was complicated that there is a group of kids who have learned up to 10 or more, and there are others who still don't recognise up to 3. So I have to focus on how to direct that teaching, so that everyone goes progressing equally. So that is my problem, because I cannot focus on other learning outcomes that are not directly about teaching maths or vowels, you know?

The educators mentioned different strategies in dealing with the diversity in the classroom. The most often cited was adjusting activities according to children's interests and abilities. Knowing each child and his/her abilities was considered to be

essential: for example, Josefina (Arica) stated, 'In order to attend the children with each of their particularities and individualities, one has to start from a good diagnostic. I have to see first with what personalities I am going to work'. Sylvia (Santiago) mentioned that staying with the same cohort of children from the pre-kinder to kinder levels helps educators know the children's characteristics and abilities, which helps in turn adjusting her classroom activities:

I can tell you that today I attend all children with their diversity because I have them for two years, and that makes a difference. Because I know their characteristics, personalities...now, how do I work? I have to do adjustments.

Curricular adjustments were cited by several educators as the strategy used to attend the diversity of children:

Josefina (Arica): [with children with special educational needs] you can do necessary curricular adjustments, meaning you adjust your curriculum to work with that child.

Olga (Santiago): in accordance with [the conducts at the entry point], one can plan the contents to deliver or the strategies to use and adjust, in accordance with the problems.

Concrete examples of such curricular adjustments in learning activities were suggested, including differentiated individual activities, educators working closely with children with more needs and giving different roles in the group work, according to interests and abilities:

Mariana (Temuco): I have a drawing notebook [for each child] in which we work separately and there I can do differentiated activities for them. For example, I gave some children a learning book which we used as a learning text, and for those who had difficulty I had some 10 or 15 basic activities for basic learning, differentiating from those who are more advanced. So I worked with that [material] with those who had the most difficulties...

Sylvia (Santiago): when we were working on the crossword, there were children who perfectly knew, including the letters, and I do not worry. [Other] children need more basic instruction, and [we need] to know each child and the knowledge that they may not have: that's what we call curricular adjustments, and each activity is adjusted to the child or the group. For example, they had to prepare the map of Chile, and one group worked on the Northern Zone, another group on the Central Zone and the other on the Southern Zone. The children who had a [good] reading skill had to write the capital cities or the characteristics of the zone. Another group that did not have the reading skill was drawing. The other group, which was interested neither in reading nor drawing, was cutting out and pasting materials. So there was an adjustment according to the children's competences. Another activity that we did was the dramatisation of a story, in which we created a story collectively and then the group [of children] that had artistic abilities presented the story, another group was the spectators who at the end gave a



critique of the story: what they thought was good or bad...it is a very beautiful activity.

Educators also told me that they used the seating arrangement to work with children with difficulties. When Loreto (Temuco) wants to work with a small number of children, she asks her assistant to take out other children to do outdoor activities. Mariana (Temuco) has a small table for 3 to 4 children and another big one for the rest of children, and she uses the smaller one for children who tend to be distracted or children who do activities different from the others. Sylvia (Santiago) sometimes changes the seating arrangement, when some children are distracted and interrupting the class:

you saw Boy S3 was making noise with the chair... He was doing it intentionally because he knew that he was interrupting and looking at me. [So I changed his seating] not to punish him but so that he could concentrate better.

Similarly, Mariana (Temuco) uses a small table to work with a smaller number of children with particular difficulties or to help their concentration, rather than to differentiate children by abilities:

Almost never do I differentiate children in seating, unless they are talking too much to each other, then I change the seating. But I work here [a smaller table] with children who have the most difficulties with some activities.

A few educators mentioned that in deciding the seating arrangement, they utilise peer support by seating children with strong abilities next with those with weaker abilities:

Sylvia (Santiago): here children are seated according to their characteristics. Sometimes they sit next to mates they like, but other times, depending on activities, I put in groups a child with more potential and other children with lesser potentials or disadvantaged in the particular activities, so that they help each other.

Mariana (Temuco): what I also try to do is to use group monitors: I use Girl M9, who works with her classmates and help them; Boy M6 and Girl M8 as well, because children learn better with their peers than a teacher next to them.

Moreover, given that most children came from poor and vulnerable family backgrounds, training in values, such as sharing and mutual respect, was mentioned as an important aspect in their classroom:

Irena (Arica): We are all friends, we all play together, we share...would you like if this happened to you?...putting the boy or the girl in the opposite side,

and ask 'how would you feel if a friend rejects you', 'how would you feel, if he doesn't take your hand'...

Loreto (Temuco): I try to prevent those who have more resources from shadowing others. Here everyone is treated equally, and we always talk to them about respect in all senses: when they talk to me, when something happens, when one child brings something novel, so that we all share...

In the same line, several educators worked with parents, so that they support more children's learning:

Mariana (Temuco): The main and first thing was to make parents understand that children need a lot of attention at home and that we reinforce in classroom [what is taught] at home, because our work with children in the classroom alone is not sufficient.

### Family Participation

Educators were asked how children's parents and families participate in classroom activities. Most replied that they help children's homework, for example, in looking for information, preparing children's presentations and reinforce academic activities of the classroom. Irena in Arica mentioned that the guardians are always welcome to participate in the classroom activities by coming to the classroom, participating in learning trips, and even by teaching children something (e.g. manual work) in consultation with her. One educator (Josefina in Arica) emphasised the importance of the parents' creating such opportunities, not only to support children's academic learning but also to strengthen the affective parent-child relations:

Loreto (Temuco): they co-operate with me a lot also at home in pedagogic support, with small homework and mini-research work, because there are themes that [children] choose and investigate at home and then they present them here.

Mariana (Temuco): One way of working with the parents is that they learn what [their children] learn in class and they take homework... To do so, I collect more or less information about how children are at home, evaluate them and then inform [the parents] what the children's weaknesses are, what they can do at home, how they can work on mathematics. I have given them flyers [for how to work on mathematics with children].

Olga (Santiago): the *disertaciones* [poster presentations on specific topics] are the activities that parents prepare at home. They show it to the children and help them, so that [the children] here at school tell other children about their themes. There are various activities that we can do with help of guardians. For example, at the *kinder* level, I also work with the alphabet, which I send home on weekends and they work on it.

Sylvia (Santiago): these days specifically through a learning material "Cuento Viajero". The story goes to [children's homes]...the parent has to

read it and help the child to complete the traveller's story. Another way is information search [on topics] I give to children. You saw that I asked them about *huemul* and condor, and still I have not received any response. I had asked the children to say what it was, and no, they are not looking for [the information]... so, I am waiting for the meeting with guardians to explain to them what is happening. They are [tasks] that I give to the children but not written in the notebook. Before [tasks] were written [in the notebook] and the guardians took care of them, but now I tell the children, 'you are growing, and the challenge is bigger: now the challenge for you is to remember what you have to do and involve your parents. That is to say that now I do not take from parents [when they ask], 'what does my child have to do [as homework]?' No, the child has to know how to explain. That's why I give them several opportunities until one comes up with [a response] for me.

Josefina (Arica): [families' participation] has to do with the reinforcement of reading and indirectly writing and mathematics... the family has to create a space to speak with the child, to tell stories to the child, to exchange information regarding what he/she is reading with the child, to strengthen the communication with the child and also strengthen the affective ties with the child because this is quite lacking.

Some educators mentioned that they organised monthly meetings with guardians (Irena in Arica, Olga in Santiago, Loreto and Mariana in Temuco). They used these meetings to discuss the themes of the guardians' interest and to provide them with information and training in parenting skills.

Mariana (Temuco): I talked a lot with the parents, I did workshops, we went to the audiovisual room [as part of the parent education workshops] and reviewed texts with them, but even so there are parents who have difficulties...

Irena (Arica) was also concerned about the uneven participation and commitment among parents, because some parents were very committed and came to all meetings, but other parents whose children had the most behavioural problems and needed the most help tended to be absent in these meetings.

Several educators also raised the donation of material resources to the classroom as a form of participation by parents and guardians. It was quite surprising that despite the well constructed spacious building, the learning materials in the two Temuco classes, which shared the same classroom, were noticeably fewer than those in the other regions and of poorer quality. And, as shown below, the learning materials mostly consisted of what teachers produced or the families provided (e.g. children's books, recycled items, such as popsicle bars and bottle caps). In addition, in the Temuco and Santiago schools parents were asked to contribute to the classes with tangible materials, such as pencils, soap and detergents, paper towels, etc. In Olga's

class some families helped produce the costumes for all children for the *Fiesta Patria* dance.

Planning and evaluation of learning activities were not mentioned by the educators as counting on the participation of parents and families. Olga, when asked if she involved the families in planning activities, responded that she only discussed the planning of activities with the families when children travel outside of school:

going outside the school, of course, those things we plan with [the families], because generally there has to be money for transportation...but the rest, the planning of activities, no [family participation].

Josefina (Arica) was the only one who mentioned that families participate in evaluation activities:

We carry out another evaluation, that is the evaluation by the guardians. They review and see, with a guideline, 'what are the things I see my son did well and what things I see my son is lacking in. And in it what are my actions? To what I commit myself to support my son?' So, we are giving the families [the opportunity for] participation.

#### Classroom resources

With respect to the question, 'do you have sufficient resources (e.g. material resources, information and training opportunities) to meet the learning needs of all children?', the educators' responses varied among the schools. In Arica, both Irena and Josefina confirmed that there were 'a lot of materials' provided by the Ministry of Education at least in the past 3 or 4 years, including materials for science and language learning, books and even computers. They also made use of recycled materials: for example, they use bottle caps for counting exercises. Irena mentioned that she sometimes borrows learning materials from the special education teacher of the same school. In Santiago too, Olga and Sylvia confirmed that they receive teaching and learning materials from the Ministry (via municipality or province). Sylvia mentioned that schools receive different types of materials annually, such as learning materials, books and toys. Moreover, Olga mentioned that at the beginning of the year, the educators would prepare a list of materials needed and ask the children's families to provide them.

In contrast to the general satisfaction among the Arica and Santiago educators with the availability of material resources, both educators in Temuco depended on the materials provided by the families and felt they were lacking necessary learning material resources.

Loreto: with respect to material resources, I work with the support of the families. If parents with less resource, as I was telling you, do not bring them, I will give them [their children what the other children brought].... Now once in a blue moon we may receive some materials from the Ministry [of Education]. Then I keep and use those materials in case we lack something, because I cannot demand [so much from the families]...The difficulty is only that the government does not give you economic resources for schools, so with the little money that we earn, we cannot [spend money for classroom materials] from our own pocket. Because it would be ideal...to decorate the classroom, maybe with [learning] corners, mathematics and science materials, to allow [the children] to investigate many things...but we cannot.

Mariana also mentioned that she had to ask the parents to provide the learning materials, stationary and toys. When I asked if she had learning materials such as for mathematics or science, she responded:

No, that, there isn't. Here there are some cubes that we use for mathematics but other than those, not really. We use popsicle bars...I ask children to bring bottle caps, so we can use for colour or shape...

In terms of human resources, several educators mentioned the importance of classroom assistants who supported them in conducting classroom activities: their presence was particularly appreciated when the educators needed to give more individualised attention to children with difficulties. Mariana (Temuco) told me that in general a classroom assistant was assigned only to the pre-kinder level in her school in Temuco but not to the kinder level. She mentioned that this was a major challenge for kinder-level educators when they had children with learning difficulties. Loreto, however, had an assistant who also worked with Mariana in the afternoon:

Loreto (Temuco): for the quantity of children, thank god that I have an assistant this year. It becomes a problem when you want to give feedback to children with more learning difficulties, because you need to find them a different method for them, so that they can learn; but in order to do so, you need to do it individually or in small groups, which is not possible for me alone, given the number of the children...for example, here I sometimes work with a small group with most problems and she [the assistant] takes the others to do activities outside.

Josefina also mentioned that her classroom assistant played an important role in supporting her in activities and leading music sessions.

A few educators mentioned that they needed, but could not always count on, support of specialists in order to work with children with learning difficulties and

behavioural problems. Olga (Santiago) mentioned that the school did not provide specialised assistance for children at pre-kinder level.

Olga: I think what is needed is support of a multi-disciplinary team. The integration [with support of specialists] happens only from the kinder level. From kinder, teams of special education or phono-audiologists or whatever is provided.

Sylvia in the same school mentioned, however, that at kinder level the specialist support was provided only to children with linguistic and motor skills problems, and she sometimes felt the need for specialists' support to deal with children's behavioural problems. When children exhibit behavioural problems, educators were usually left to solve them by themselves in consultation with the families, whose response might not be forthcoming.

Sylvia (Santiago): In kinder only language and motor skills. The behavioural part of children is not attended; that begins to be detected as part of a set of application in the Grade one [primary level]. In pre-kinder and kinder, educators are the ones who solve it. But I feel that we don't know everything. We need someone, in this case, I need someone to guide me with Boy S7. I have special treatment with him: when he is lying down on the floor, I know that I cannot pull him from that space because it is his space. When he is on the floor, I have to wait for him until he wants to get up and then I can talk to him. But I may be wrong. That is [based on] my experience of what I believe it is, but sometimes I have a doubt...I ask the school counsellor, and she says he has to be sent to a psychologist or a neurologist, but the problem is I do not get his parents' support.

Mariana also tries to involve the families of children with difficulties and also seeks advice from a special education teacher at school:

Mariana: if the [children] have major difficulties, I ask the special education teacher for help...she has been great help for me with these children, because their parents have the difficulty understanding that their children really have difficulties and need —aside from the training and support in the classroom— more support at home and if necessary, to take the children to specialists.

In terms of training and professional development opportunities, the educators in Arica and Santiago took active part in meetings and training workshops among educators and also received training offered at universities. They also exchanged ideas and knowledge with their peers and engaged in self- and mutual learning.

Olga (Santiago) said she and other educators trained themselves regularly through monthly workshops. The educators were sometimes sent to courses at universities, so she believed that the educators at her school were constantly trained. Sylvia (Santiago) confirmed that the educators at her school were sent to a university for in-

service training when they received the new curricular bases, and since then they continued training themselves in the municipal workshops.

In Arica, Irena also felt that she was continuously engaged in training activities with other educators of the municipal committee of early childhood educators, who met for this purpose twice monthly. Josefina in the same school also said that the collaboration among the educators in the same school and training meetings through the municipal committee of educators had been strengthened in the past years.

On the other hand, it seems that in Temuco such collaboration and mutual training among educators was not regularly carried out. Loreto and Mariana said that they rarely met other educators to discuss and plan activities together primarily due to the lack of time or physical space for regular meetings. Loreto also lamented the lack of in-service training opportunities:

Loreto: It's a pity that here in Chile there is no constant in-service training given to us. We train ourselves in personal forms, and very rarely do we go to a course. When they launched the Curricular Bases, they launched it one day to another without any information, so we had to research ourselves and getting ourselves informed.

Mariana, who recently finished her university degree with the new Curricular Bases, confirmed that educators in her schools have not received systematic in-service training:

Sometimes invitation letters to [training] courses arrive from [universities], but they arrive too late...the fact is that there is no general capacity development for all educators.

### Educators' key competencies

The last question asked with respect to the diversity in the classroom was: What are the key capacities of early childhood educators to meet the diverse needs of all children in the classroom? Olga (Santiago) emphasised that educators foremost have to love children and 'win' them with tenderness before setting rules or teaching. The others educators' responses focussed on how to support children's learning. Irena (Arica) and Loreto (Temuco) stressed the importance of continuously learning and innovating their practice, and this was precisely what happened when the Curricular Bases were introduced.

Irena: if one does not have interest and desire to keep learning and keep innovating one's practice, then we'll stay there. That was the beginning of the Curricular Bases – to innovate [one's] actions with children, innovate activities that one does with children. So, the constant desire to continue

learning... If we want children to change their way of acting when learning, we also have to change our form of facing that learning.

Loreto: with all these challenges that the new methodologies in the Curricular Bases are giving us, you have to have the capacity to investigate because children today are more and more awake. Television, computer and internet give them more resources. So you have to be continuously improving yourself... Creativity is the most [needed] now... for example, in this class I have to change activities all the time.

Josefina (Arica) and Mariana (Temuco) emphasised that educators have to assess and be attentive to each child's needs to be able to help them achieve significant learning. Both of them referred to the roles of educators as mediators of children's learning:

Josefina: [children] have to achieve significant learning...one of the characteristics is to be always attentive to the child's needs: if this child does not learn in this way, then he/she learns it in another way.

Mariana: mainly the ideal is to teach from constructivism. The child as an integrated being, who does not only learn one thing but everything encompasses a set of learning outcomes. Then the educator has to know how to differentiate what is the best for the children from the assessment.

Sylvia (Santiago) also identified as a key capacity of an educator that of knowing each child and respecting each child's individuality. She also said that classroom norms are important in the context of diversity, because understanding and observing norms fosters children's respect for others; and educators' role is to help children understand the cause-and-effect of their actions and thus allow children to understand the reasons for the norms. She drew an example of an incidence in the morning when one girl was asked to count the number of the children present:

Girl S6 made a mistake and I never said, 'no, it was wrong'. [I said] 'the classmates did not let you concentrate; that was the problem. Let us all help Girl S6 count'. Girl S6 has a problem with the number sequence, so I have to reinforce immediately and help her out. I have to do the adjustment on the spot but also delicately.

This example shows Sylvia's strategy in reminding children of the norm (No talking when someone is speaking) through explaining the cause-and-effect relationship (children's talking distracted Girl S6, and thus she made a mistake), while at the same time attending to Girl S6's individual learning need.

### Implementation of the Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases

The second part of the interviews consisted of questions related to the



implementation of the Curricular Bases. The first question was whether the Curricular Bases present a new vision of the child. In the document, the young child is visualised as:

a growing person, who develops his/her identity, advances in discovering his/her emotions and potentials in a holistic sense, establishes significant affective links and expresses his/her feelings, develops the capacity to explore and communicate experiences and ideas, and explains the world according to his/her understandings (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 15).

In addition to this conceptualisation of the child as an active learning agent, the Curricular Bases place emphasis on the child's environment, both at the level of the immediate family and the larger societal levels, and the children are to be considered 'active agents of specific [ethnic, linguistic and social] cultures' (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 14).

To the question, 'Does the Curricular Bases present a new vision of the child?', Irina (Arica) stated that the Curricular Bases presented 'a participative and active child, who forms his/her own pedagogic actions', and from that perspective the child has shifted from the subject of care to the subject of rights:

That is fundamental. That is the child who begins to have rights, and now it's not only necessary to take care of them, but the child should have a space in the society and be considered...The society has to begin organising and adjusting itself to the needs of these children. They are not the children who cannot enter libraries because they are bothering or break things, but the other way around. The society has to be ready to accept that these are children with rights and they are in a crucial phase.

She also stressed that all children had 'a tremendous learning potential', revealing that in public schools that attended vulnerable children coming from poor families, there was a certain prejudice with respect to the children's potential:

But these days we know that children are born equally with respect to their learning potential...that's what neurosciences tell us and that has an impact on programmes, because in Chile for many years [early childhood] programmes were compensatory programmes, which aimed at recuperating children's deficits, and not empowering programmes.

Iris mentions that such compensatory tendency was evidenced in the assessment instruments used before, which was to screen either normal or delayed development, the latter being divided into having a risk or deficit. She pointed out that the shift from this 'downward look' at deficits to an 'upward look' at children's potentials was the major change.

For Josefina (Arica), the new vision was that the child does not learn sectorally but in an integrated manner. She also acknowledged the developments of neuroscience as an important part of the new curriculum, as educators were now shown that the child is capable of learning from conception. Mariana (Temuco) also stated that children used to be considered passive and best taught from the behaviourist way of directly teaching toward them, while they were now considered differently in the Curricular Bases as being 'more awake' and having a great diversity. Children now, according to their characteristics, needs and necessities, work on classroom projects.

Olga (Santiago) also stated that the child was seen in a more integrated manner. Moreover, she mentioned the child's active role in their own learning:

What is now more emphasised is that the child participates more in activities: they can choose materials to use, activities they want to do, so sometimes they are given choices. I think that is more now, because before [educators use to say to children] you are going to do this and that; but not now, we even plan with them...So I think from that point of view the perspective has changed a little: that the child is more active, active in their learning.

However, during the observation of Olga's classroom –as in the other classes– the choice of materials and activities were largely limited to free play. Sylvia (Santiago) was also emphatic in the child's active role in his/her learning:

Of course. The Curricular Bases present us the child [who is] more independent and capable of learning by him/herself, but [at the same time] providing him/her the means to investigate, explore and decide his/her own learning.

Loreto (Temuco), on the other hand, believes that it is the era in which we live, rather than the Curricular Bases, that presents the new vision of the child and expects the child to learn many more things than in the past.

because children are learning alone [these days]. [Through] TV...or the neighbourhood or school environment, they are learning a lot and they ask increasingly more complicated questions...in computer class, they handle it better than [educators]...With the new Bases, children now learn by doing.

If in the Curricular Bases, the child is conceived as an individual born with equal rights and potentials and learns actively and in an integrated manner, how has the role of the educator changed? This was the next interview question. In the Curricular Bases, the role of the educator is characterised as: a 'trainer and reference model' for children together with their families, 'designer, implementer and evaluator' of the curricula, 'mediator of learning' and 'permanent action researcher' (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 14).

Educators used different words to describe their roles, and 'mediator' of children's learning was the word used the most among the educators (Loreto: 'one who orients, mediate, researches'; Josefina: 'facilitator, mediate learning'; Sylvia: 'mediator'). Sylvia (Santiago) explains this role as follows:

Our role changed, because before it was a totally vertical role in which we directed the learning; we were the ones with the reason over what the child had to learn without respecting their individuality, and all had to do the same...the education has to be only a mediator: a mediator of learning, who helps, delivers elements, dialogues with the child and has to look for resources for the child to be the protagonist of his/her own learning.

Loreto (Temuco) and Irena (Arica) pointed out that being innovative and creative in their teaching activities is also an important role as an educator, while Olga (Santiago) seemed to have a more directive approach to children's learning: 'supervise, steer, orientate...orientate, supervise learning...'.

#### Challenges in implementing the curriculum

The next question was what difficulties educators experienced in implementing the Curricular Bases. The challenge mentioned by most educators was the difficulty in planning activities, because the curricular bases, particularly the expected learning, are very broad. Josefina (Arica) believes that the curricular bases should be more organised or defined, because the expected learning, for example, is very broad and the contents are not precise enough:

the work that has been and still is challenging us a lot is, for example, the expected learning, which is very broad...It is logical that it is broad, because it opens up a range of possibilities for you, but there should be a part which says, for this expected learning, you will work on all these contents...It is too, too broad; it should be a little more precise.

Moreover, Josefina pointed out that the number of expected learning outcomes (232) are too numerous to be achieved in two years. The fact that the learning outcomes have no sequencing or hierarchy gave her the impression that the curriculum needed better organisation, although this allowed flexibility in choosing learning areas and activities to educators. Similarly, Loreto (Temuco) would have liked to have more precise teaching plans similar to those for the basic education level.

I think that the lack of the [curricular] bases is what is coming now; the plans and programmes because in those there will be objective and smaller objectives to meet...Now it is requested within the system that we work on specific objectives, drawing from the expected learning outcomes...From the first grade of basic education on, they have their programmes that are already

established [by the Ministry of Education] and deal with the content with objectives, but we do not have them and we only have expected learning outcomes, from which we have to draw and break down to be able to work and achieve what we want. I think that is the lack of the bases.

On the other hand, Mariana (Temuco), who had received pre-service education with the new curricular bases, mentioned that she had to show other educators how to select and adjust the learning outcomes for children with more complexity or less complexity as well as how to evaluate them. She mentioned that the other educators in the school were having difficulties, mainly because they had not had training or workshops to learn such skills. Nonetheless, she also wished that the curricular bases had been more specific in learning outcomes:

Well, I can break down a learning outcome but it would be more comfortable for an educator if the learning outcomes were more broken down and the content as well...One educator [at this school] received a document in which a class of a Master's degree did a breakdown of the contents of learning outcomes. And it helps and helps a lot, so for me the ideal would be all educators to have such breakdown of contents of the expected learning outcomes.

Sylvia (Santiago) also mentioned that what challenged her work was the breakdown of learning outcomes. Moreover, she pointed out that the number expected learning outcomes for language and mathematics could be smaller, as several expected learning outcomes related to increasing vocabulary, phonemes and counting, for example, were similar or duplicated. Moreover, the pedagogical orientations were too broad for her. For these reasons, she thought that suggested activities, as existed for the basic education curriculum, would be useful. By so doing, she believed that even if educators adapted the activities with their personal touch, children could receive similar learning experiences of a similar quality, noting that private schools have their own programmes.

#### The Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases and classroom diversity

With respect to whether the curricular bases have facilitated educators' work in meeting needs of diverse children, flexibility is the most cited answer to this question, implying that the challenge of the openness or broadness of the new curricular bases was also its strength. Olga (Santiago) responded that there was nothing rigid in the curricular bases and one could adapt the learning outcomes for different children.

But because [the curricular bases] are flexible, one can adapt the learning outcomes, everything, resources...For example, in basic education

everything is given, like everything is formed: these learning outcomes have to happen, with these contents, everything is given in the planning. But we are not. Sometimes, this can be more tiresome for us to plan but on the other hand it is good, because it is flexible.

For Sylvia (Santiago), the curricular bases gave her freedom, because the learning outcomes are broadly defined and educators have to break them down. Mariana (Temuco) explained how she used the expected learning outcomes of the curricular bases flexibly according to children's needs:

you can use all [expected] learning outcomes from the bases: I select [one] to activate prior knowledge and another to express ideas, so each activity always brings learning, and if not, I can adjust...[I]f a child has a specific need, I can pick up an expected learning outcome, break it down and adjust it, according to his/her needs...And if it is complex, I can take the same learning outcomes and add more difficulties and complexity according to children's needs.

Josefina (Arica) also pointed out the methodological flexibility that the curricular bases provide:

The curricular bases give you a broad range of methodology to work with..., so I look for what is [the most suitable] for children with problems and allow them to achieve equally significant learning outcomes...The curricular bases give us such flexibility to allow us to go back and forth...you can work with this child in this way, and with another child in that way. We can also work and give space to children in special education class... [The curriculum] allows you to work according to children's learning rhythms.

While most educators indicated that the flexibility of the curricular bases –especially the ability to plan activities based on the expected learning outcomes– facilitated their work with the diversity of children, a few educators mentioned that the new curricular bases provided them with a guideline. Loreto (Temuco) explained that educators can now select, organise and adjust expected learning outcomes, while formerly they would tend to think first what activities to do (e.g. 'work with colours') and then 'invent' objectives (e.g. 'children identify colours'). More specifically, Irena (Arica) indicated that the curricular bases, namely the area of learning experiences 'personal and social formation', provided a guideline for educators to include issues of respect for diversity and positive interpersonal relations in the programme and deal with them in a more systematic way.

When asked specifically whether the curricular bases had challenged their work with the diversity of children, half of the educators interviewed (Irena, Olga and Loreto) responded that they did not have particular difficulties. The challenges mentioned by

Sylvia (Santiago) and Josefina (Arica) did not refer specifically to the challenges that the new curricular bases presented in working with the diversity of children; they referred to the general difficulties to break down and organise the expected learning outcomes of the curricular bases, as mentioned before. Only Mariana (Temuco) mentioned that in trying to help all children achieve the expected learning outcomes in the areas of mathematics and language (e.g. early literacy, use of numbers), she found it difficult to manage learning activities for children with different levels of progress (e.g. the number of vowels and numbers that different children can manage). She felt that given the emphasis on language and mathematics in her school, she could not skip these areas and take expected learning outcomes from other areas:

So that is the problem, because I cannot focus on other learning outcomes that are not directly related to mathematics or vowels...how to separate [children according to their abilities], so that all children achieve these learning outcomes at the end of the year and even so, to be able to take up other learning outcomes and work on other important things as well.

Her response, however, could be interpreted as the difficulty that educators generally face in teaching children with different learning rhythms, rather than the challenge attributable to the new curricular bases.

In support of the above analysis that the majority of educators interviewed believe that the flexibility of the curricular bases facilitated their work and did not pose particular challenges in working with diverse groups of children, the educators unanimously responded that the new curricular bases were adequate for all children in their classrooms. All responded that the curricular bases were adequate for all, because they were flexible and could be adjusted to the reality of the groups and individuals. For example,

Loreto (Temuco): They can be adjusted, because the [curricular] bases are not something fixed but you can go adjusting to your reality, your class, so there are no major problems.

Josefina (Arica): it gives space to all children. To all children, including children with special educational needs...you can do necessary curricular adjustment; you can adjust your curricular to work with that child. Therefore it is a curriculum that allows me to work with diversity, so there is no problem.

Irena (Arica), who responded that the curricular bases presented no major difficulty in her work to attend the diversity of children, added that the document is adequate because 'it targets all the [development] areas –emotional, social and cognitive–

what [children] have to learn'. However, as mentioned earlier, for Loreto (Temuco), the existence of the classroom assistance was critical in providing more individualised feedback and support for children with more difficulties.

With respect to the content of the curricular bases, most of the educators wished that the expected learning outcomes of the curricular bases had been easier to handle to facilitate their planning of classroom activities (e.g. Olga: 'simplified', Sylvia: 'suggested activities', Josefina: 'organised' and 'precise', Loreto: 'smaller objectives', Mariana: 'more specific in learning outcomes'). Sylvia (Santiago) also wished that the learning outcomes on language and mathematics could be reduced. Moreover, several educators expressed their expectations for the educators' guide for curricular implementation at the Transition Level, which the Ministry of Education was preparing (Chile Ministerio de Educación, 2009).

As for the educators' assessment of the implementation process of the new curricular bases, both educators in Temuco expressed the need for in-service training, as none of the educators in this school, except Mariana, had received training on the new curricular bases. On the other hand, the educators in Arica and Santiago received in-service training soon after the curricular bases were launched, and they felt they had enough collegial support and continuing learning. Josefina (Arica), however, shared her disappointment that despite the hard work she and her colleagues put into the early implementation of the curricular bases as one of the reference centres, they did not receive any recognition for the efforts or results. Her suggestion for the improvement of the curricular implementation was thus to give educators incentives and reinforcement, for example, certificates or acknowledgement of the successful curricular implementation.

#### **6.4 Perceptions of Pedagogical Supervisors**

The survey addressed to the pedagogical supervisors of schools included similar questions as asked of the educators, with main questions divided into two parts: diversity within the school and the implementation of the early childhood education curriculum. As mentioned in the Chapter 5, the samples were selected from municipal and subsidised private schools that had the preschool level attached to them. The pedagogical supervisors of schools normally supervise both pre-school educators and basic education teachers.

Of the 49 valid responses, all but 4 pedagogical supervisors from Santiago responded that they considered the children in their school to be culturally diverse. A closer look at the explanatory comments for their responses to this question reveals that the two respondents who did not select either 'yes' or 'no' (i.e. no response selected) described the diversity that exists in their schools (socioeconomic factors and special education needs), while one of the four 'no' respondents commented in fact that diversity was observed in students' socioeconomic background, parents' educational levels and special education needs of some students.

Of the 47 respondents who described the diversity in their schools, the most often mentioned aspect was children's socioeconomic background (39 respondents), followed by their special educational needs (33 respondents), ethnicity (28 respondents) and gender (21 respondents). Also noteworthy is that several explicitly mentioned the family composition and situation (e.g. single parent, unemployed father, parents in prison or addicted to drugs) as well as parents' educational levels.

**Table 7 Characteristics of the school diversity described by pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**

Socioeconomic background	39
Special educational needs	33
Ethnicity (including linguistic)	28
Gender	21
Family composition and situation	10
Parents' education level	7
Nationality	6
Learning achievement	2
Religion	1
Residence (urban/rural)	1

According to the pedagogical supervisors, the biggest challenge faced by them and educators in working with diversity was to ensure that all children achieve desired learning outcomes and develop capacities and skills, regardless of their background and different rhythms of learning (21 out of 50 valid responses). In the second place, respect for diversity and inclusion of all children in the classroom and society were equally considered as a challenge of diversity (11 respondents). In terms of providing personalised attention to meet the needs of all students, 8 respondents mentioned this challenge, while 6 others mentioned specifically the challenge to provide adequate, individualised attention to children with special educational needs. Given the socioeconomic and family conditions of many students attending these



schools, some pedagogical supervisors suggested that it was challenging to obtain support and participation of parents (7 respondents) and that they were concerned about emotional and social development of children (7 respondents).

**Table 8 Challenges in working with the diversity of children, as seen by pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**

All children learn and develop capacities and skills	21
Respect diversity (by both children and educators)	11
Include and integrate all children to classroom and society	11
Provide personalised attention / curricular adjustments	8
Involve parents in children's learning	7
Promote children's social and emotional development	7
Provide adequate/individualised attention to children with SEN	6
Counter external factors (e.g. family problems)	2
Develop language skills	2
Promote articulation with other levels (e.g. pre-primary with primary)	1
Deal with lack of resources (e.g. physical space, materials)	1
Respond to parents' needs and expectations	1

The responses to the question on how the pedagogical supervisors and educators overcame these challenges could be divided in two categories: how to support all children's different learning needs and how to promote respect for diversity in the classroom. Under the first category, some 30% of the pedagogical supervisors highlighted the importance of team work among educators to plan activities, share experiences, support and learn from each other (15 out of 50 valid responses), closely followed by the communication with, and involvement of, parents and families to support children's learning and development (14 respondents). Eleven respondents mentioned the mixture of group and personalised work for children, while others emphasised the use of assessments and diagnostics (9 respondents), specialists' support for children with special educational needs (9 respondents) as well as support networks that exist within and outside school (8 respondents). Under the second category, the use of special activities or materials to promote diversity (10 respondents) and value education to foster such values as respect, solidarity and trust in children (6 respondents) were highlighted. Consistent with the classroom observations, the mention of the diversity of content according to children's needs was uncommon (only 3 out of 50 respondents mentioned this).

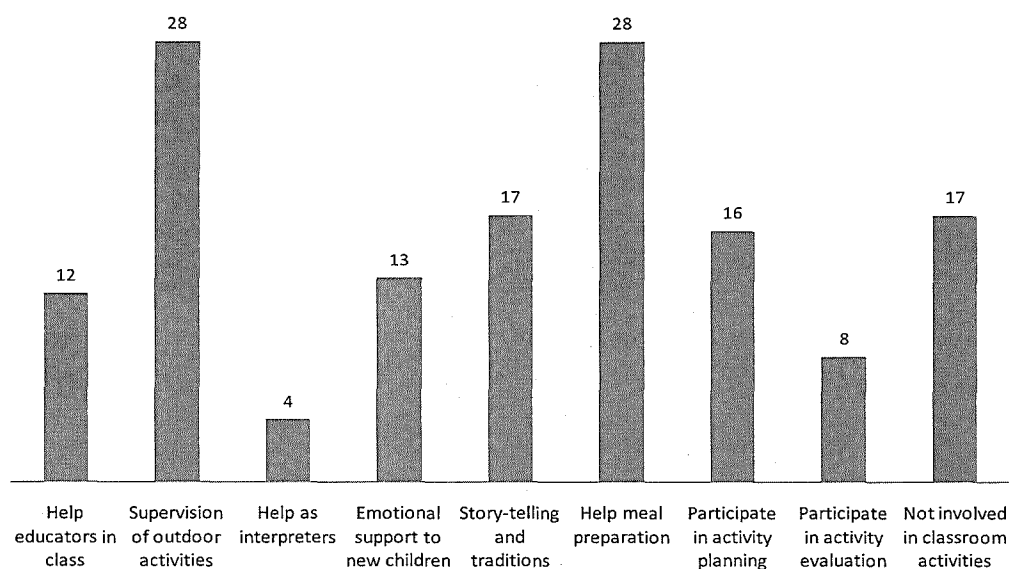
**Table 9 Strategies employed to overcome the challenges of diversity among children, as seen by pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**

Team work among educators to plan together, support and learn from each other	15
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Communication with and involvement of parents and families	14
Pedagogical diversification, mixing individual and group work	11
Use of special activities and materials to promote diversity	10
Conducting and following up assessments and diagnostics	9
Seek support of specialists to support children with SEN	9
Use of the support networks inside and outside of school	8
Value education to promote diversity (respect, solidarity, trust, etc.)	6
Provision of inclusive and comfortable classroom environment	5
In-service training to update educators' skills and knowledge	5
Knowledge of each child's needs and consideration of diversity in work	5
Search and application of innovative teaching-learning methodologies	4
Professional ethnics and commitment	4
Diversification of contents	3
Constant encouragement and reinforcement of children	2
Provision of same opportunities for all children	2
Structured work through detailed planning	1
Monitoring of planned activities	1

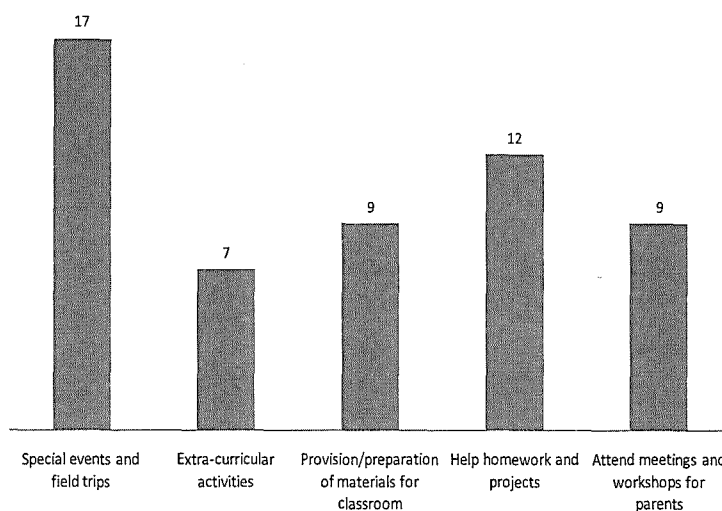
The educators in the schools I visited emphasised the importance as well as the challenge of involving parents and families in children's learning activities. Figure 6 below indicates that, according to the pedagogical supervisors, families participate most frequently in classroom activities through supervision of children's outdoor activities and help with meal preparation, which were selected by 28 out of 51 respondents. One in three respondents answered that families and community members tell children stories and demonstrate cultural traditions (17 respondents) or also participate in planning learning activities (16 respondents). However, one-third of respondents replied that families and communities were not generally involved in classroom activities.

**Figure 6 How families and communities participate in classroom activities, according to pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**



On the other hand, 35 respondents provided other ways of involving families and communities in children's education activities, which can be considered to be as important as direct participation in daily classroom activities (Figure 7). For example, one-third of the respondents mentioned that families and communities participate in special events, such as cultural events and field trips, while one in four pedagogical supervisors mentioned families' role in helping children's homework and project work, in particular, the preparation of *disertaciones* (poster presentations). Several respondents mentioned families' material support to classroom, including donation of materials for classroom activities and preparation of materials for cultural activities and school beautification and decoration, as well as their participation in meetings and workshops of parents and guardians.

**Figure 7 Other ways of involving families and communities, according to pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**



With respect to the availability of resources, 60% of pedagogical supervisors (30 out of 50 valid responses) believed that their schools have sufficient resources for educators to meet the learning needs of all children. Nonetheless, twelve respondents mentioned that teaching and learning materials were not sufficient to provide all children with a quality learning experience, while eleven respondents commented that the opportunities for in-service training of educators are scarce or costly. Other resources that pedagogical supervisors felt were insufficient were computers (4 respondents), specialists in SEN (3 respondents), human resources in general (2 respondent) and libraries for the preschool level (1 respondent).

For pedagogical supervisors, the key capacity of preschool educators to meet the diverse needs of all children was firstly 'empathy' toward children, which was mentioned in 27 of 50 valid responses. Secondly, educators were expected to be 'creative' and 'innovative' in planning and leading classroom activities (18 respondents). Pedagogical supervisors certainly expect educators to command good knowledge of the contents and methods to implement the new curriculum (16 respondents), while they also consider the educators' respect for children's differences and non-discriminatory practice important (16 respondents). They also mentioned educators' professionalism, including their sense of responsibility and dedication to their profession as a vocation (15 respondents) as well as their constant efforts to reflect on and try to improve their practice (12 respondents). According to pedagogical supervisors, educators need to be flexible and adjust activities to

children's needs (11 respondents), although they need to be organised and structured nonetheless in planning activities (9 respondents). Several other key capacities were suggested, including technical knowledge, expected roles and specific skills (Table 10), while 'mediator of children's learning', which was most often mentioned by the educators in the case studies, was mentioned by only 3 pedagogical supervisors.

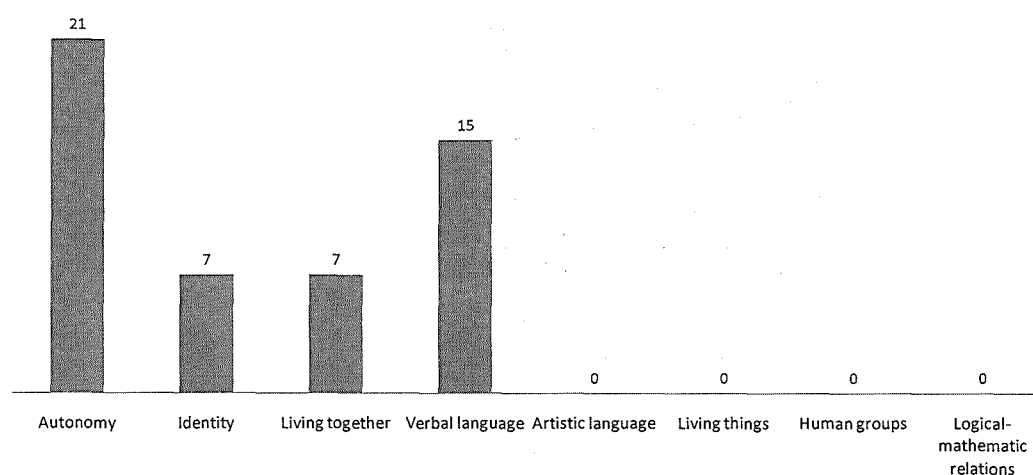
**Table 10 Key capacities of preschool educators to meet diverse needs of all children according to pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**

Empathy, affection and patience	27
Creativity and innovativeness	18
Knowledge of curricular contents and methods	16
Respect for children's differences, no discrimination and tolerance	16
Responsibility and dedication to the profession	15
Self-reflection and willingness to improve practice	12
Flexibility to adjust practice to children's needs	11
Being organised and structured for activity planning	9
Communication skills (with children and parents)	7
Team player	6
Leadership skills	4
Role model for children	4
Diagnostic, monitoring and assessment of children	4
Knowledge of child psychology and neurological basis of the child development	4
Mediator of children's learning	3
Ability to help children explore, discover and be surprised	3
Skill to use technology in teaching-learning process	3
Conflict resolution	2
Knowing the children	2
Social conscience and values	1

The survey responses indicated that the new early childhood education curriculum had been introduced to all 51 schools. The pedagogical supervisors were asked to number the eight learning nuclei in their order of priority, and as Figure 8 below illustrates, 42% of the respondents chose 'autonomy' as the most important learning nucleus (21 out of 50 valid answers). 'Autonomy' within the personal and social formation area of the curriculum is referred to as the child's progressive capacity to manage oneself in acting, thinking and feeling while increasing his/her initiative and independence as well as taking responsibility for his/her acts. For many children, preschool is the first instance where they are separated from their families, and the expected learning under autonomy includes not only socio-emotional development (e.g. initiative, confidence, independence, responsibility) but also motor skills and

skills needed for a healthy lifestyle. Secondly, 30% of the respondents (15) considered 'verbal language' the most important learning nucleus, while 'identity' and 'living together' came in the third place (7 respondents each). It is noteworthy that as much as 70% of the pedagogical supervisors chose learning nuclei within the personal and social formation area.

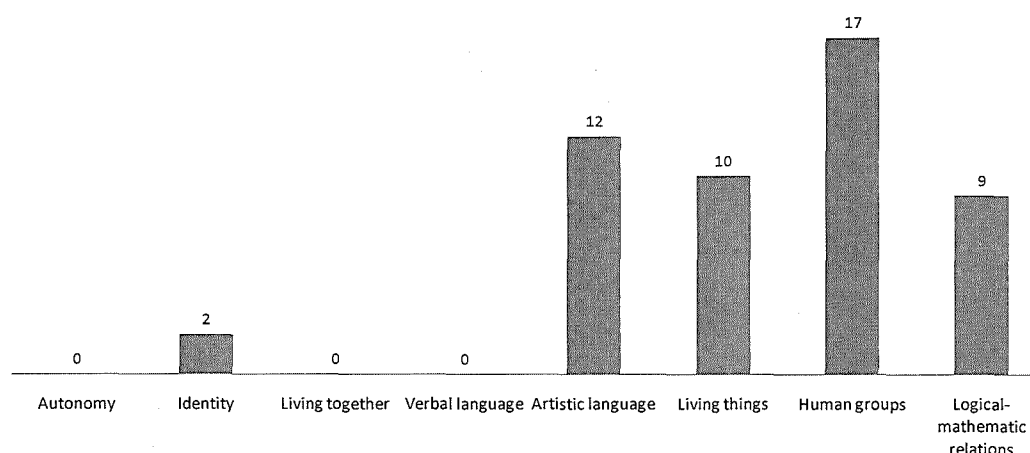
**Figure 8 Learning nuclei considered to be the highest priority by pedagogical supervisors**



In contrast, Figure 9 below illustrates the learning nuclei that were considered the lowest priority by the pedagogical supervisors. A large number of them (17 of 50 respondents) gave the lowest priority to the learning nucleus 'human groups and their lifestyles and relevant events', which aims to foster the child's awareness of and appreciation for different human groups (the family, the community, the country, the world) and their customs and traditions as well as the use of artefacts, tools and technologies. This learning objective, related to cultural diversity, was followed by 'artistic language' (12 respondents), 'living things and their surrounding' (10 respondents) and 'logical-mathematic relations and quantification' (9 respondents). It is of no surprise that 'living things' was given a low priority because 'science and environment' was assessed consistently as inadequate in all the classrooms evaluated with the ECERS-E. However, given the emphasis that the educators placed on language and mathematics activities, it was unexpected that several pedagogical supervisors considered the 'logical-mathematic relations and quantification' as the least important learning objective. It seems that their expectation for early childhood

education is heavily weighted towards the areas of social and behavioural aspects, including verbal communication.

**Figure 9 Learning nuclei considered to be the lowest priority by pedagogical supervisors**



With respect to the vision of the child presented in the new curriculum, all but two pedagogical supervisors (96%) responded that the curriculum presented a new vision. As for the two respondents (both from the Metropolitan Region) who believed there was no different vision of the child, one commented that the essence of the child is considered the same as the previous programme and very schematised, while the other mentioned that the curriculum presented a different way of organising the same work as before. In explaining their positive answers, however, several respondents focussed on the new characteristics of the curriculum rather than the new vision of the child the curriculum projected (e.g. ‘the curriculum allowed us organise our professional practice and oriented the pedagogical work...’ (respondent 24811); ‘because [the curriculum] is organised in 3 areas that are fundamental fields in every stage of human life...’ (respondent 20821)). Nonetheless, the conception of the child as an active agent or protagonist of his/her own learning came across strongly, as suggested by 14 respondents. Also highlighted was the notion of ‘the whole child’ and the holistic nature of child development (9 respondents), while the recognition of the child as an active subject, rather than a passive object of care and attention, was also reflected in the new vision’s ‘autonomous and independent person’ and

‘having high potentials and capacities to learn) suggested by 6 respondents respectively.

**Table 11 New vision of the child according to pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**

Active agent or protagonist in their own learning	14
‘The whole child’ – holistic nature of child development	9
Autonomous and independent person	6
Having high potentials and capacities to learn	6
Child-centred approach (building on the child’s interests, strengths and past experiences)	6
Modern child for today’s globalised world	5
Participant or contributor to the community	4
Responsibility and role of the family	3

When asked whether the new curriculum had changed the role of educators in their schools, 86% of the pedagogical supervisors (42 of 49 valid responses) responded affirmatively. Sixteen respondents stated that the educator’s role has become that of a mediator or facilitator of children’s learning, the same point emphasised by the educators in the case study. Closely related to this role are ‘constructivist’ approaches to learning in the sense of supporting children to acquire their own knowledge through experience (4 respondents) and support to children’s gradual autonomy (3 respondents). In so doing, educators were said to be more actively participating in learning activities (7 respondents), involving parents and the community in the joint endeavour of children’s learning. Given the improved articulation between the new early childhood education curriculum and that of basic education, a number of respondents noted the educator’s increased linkage with the basic education level (7 respondents) as well as with different disciplines and entities within the school (3 respondents).

**Table 12 New roles of educators due to the new curriculum according to pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**

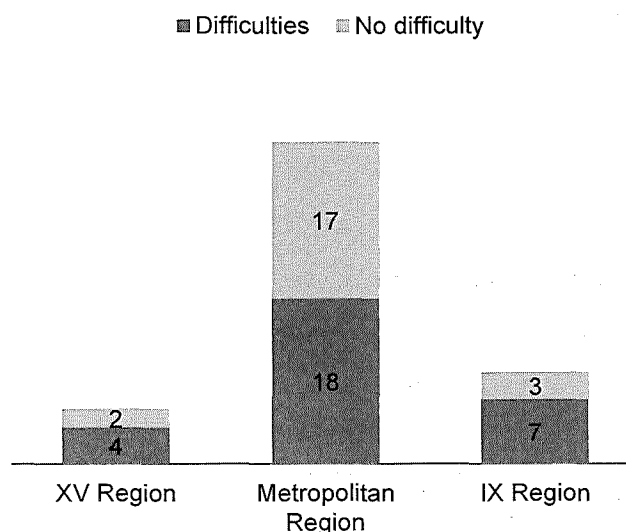
Mediator/facilitator of children’s learning	16
Linking to other levels of education (basic education)	7
More active and participatory in classroom	6
Lead joint work with families and community	5
Constructivist – based on children’s experiences and interests	4
Evaluators of learning	4
Support children’s autonomy	3
Curriculum designers	3
Link with other disciplines and entities within school	3
Constant learner	2



Researchers	2
Leader	1
Connect the process and content of learning	1
More creative	1
Have more responsibilities	1

Surprisingly, more than half of the pedagogical supervisors expressed that the educators had difficulty in implementing the new curriculum. The only respondent (Region XV) who did not specifically answer this yes/no question (response missing) commented on a difficulty by saying, '[the new curriculum] is not for classes of 40 to 45 children.' If this respondent is to be considered among those who reported on some difficulties in curricular implementation, the number of pedagogical supervisors reporting on difficulties was 29 out of 51 respondents (57%). Figure 10 illustrates the distribution by Region, showing higher proportions of respondents in the XV and IX Regions reporting on difficulties than those of the Metropolitan Region.

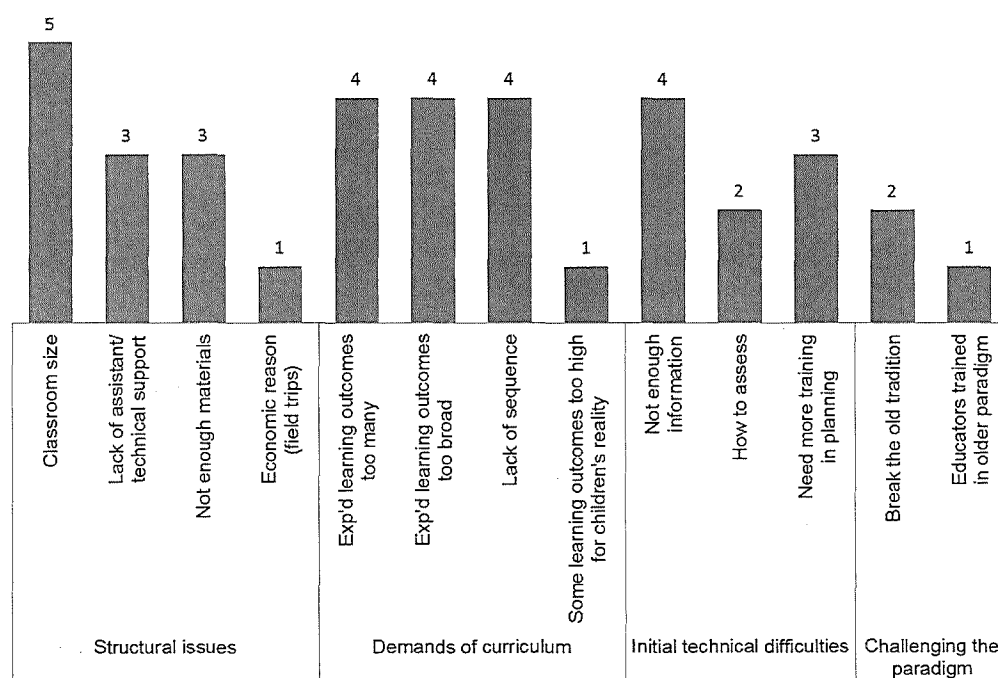
**Figure 10 Number of pedagogical supervisors who reported on educators' difficulties in implementing the new curriculum**



The difficulties described by the respondents were diverse but echoed some of the difficulties expressed by the educators interviewed during the field visits (Figure 11). They can be categorised into 4 main groups: (1) structural issues of school/classroom resources, (2) quantitative and qualitative demands of the curriculum, (3) technical difficulties at the initial stage and (4) challenging the old paradigm. The structural

issues included the classroom size, lack of assistants or support, not enough materials and lack of financial resources for school trips. Several pedagogical supervisors expressed that the expected learning items are too numerous or too broad, and lacking sequences or differentiation of learning expectations between pre-kinder and kinder levels. Some commented on the need for more information and training on how to implement the curriculum, particularly to plan activities and assess children's progress, although these difficulties were felt mainly at the beginning of the implementation when educators were introduced to the curriculum for the first time. Similarly, the difficulty in introducing a new paradigm was said to be experienced, particularly more experienced educators who were trained in and worked with the previous paradigm.

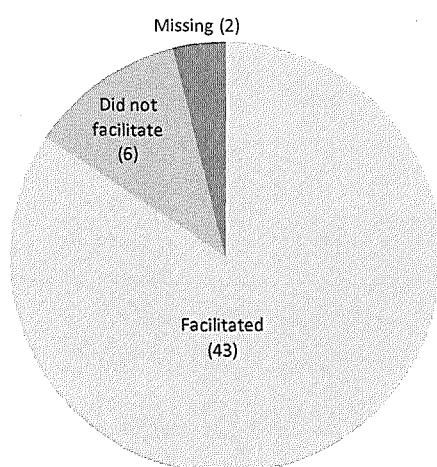
**Figure 11 Educators' difficulties in implementing the new curriculum according to pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**



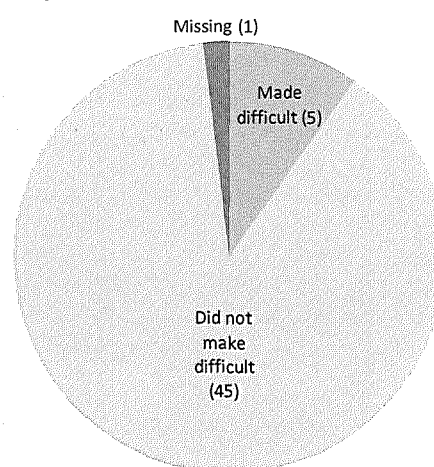
On the other hand, a few respondents who answered that the educators in their schools did not encounter difficulties in implementing the new curriculum provided comments stressing that the curriculum facilitated its planning and implementation. Another respondent mentioned that they had received a training course and were thus prepared for the curriculum implementation.

Despite the difficulties encountered by educators in implementing the new curriculum, the pedagogical supervisors were quite clear that the curriculum facilitated, rather than impeded, educators' work in serving the need of diverse groups of children. As shown in Figures 11 and 12 below, 88% of respondents (43 of 49 valid responses) responded that the curriculum facilitated educators' work in dealing with classroom diversity, while 90% of the respondents (45 of 50 valid responses) declared that it did not make their work more difficult.

**Figure 12 Number of Pedagogical Supervisors who believe the curriculum facilitated educators' work in serving needs of diverse children**



**Figure 13 Number of Pedagogical Supervisors who believe the curriculum made educators' work more difficult in serving needs of diverse children**



Several pedagogical supervisors explained that the curriculum facilitated educators' work with diverse children, firstly because the curriculum provided a flexible framework within which to adjust expected learning outcomes and activities according to the children (12 respondents) and secondly the curriculum helped educators plan systematically the learning that they would like to foster in children (11 respondents). Moreover, the curriculum was appreciated for considering the whole child and providing a broad range of learning options to choose from to benefit the whole child (7 respondents) and it values children's diverse characteristics, needs and rhythms of learning (7 respondents).

**Table 13 How the new curriculum facilitates educators' work in serving needs of diverse children, according to pedagogical supervisors (multiple answers)**

Provides flexibility framework to adjust/adapt to different children's needs	12
Helps educators plan systematically the learning outcomes	11
Considers the whole child and provides a broad range of learning options	7
Values children's diverse characteristics, needs and rhythms of learning	7

Considers diversity inside and outside classroom (family, community)	3
Addresses specifically the issue of diversity (equality and equity)	3
Focuses on the strengths and previous knowledge of each child	2
Combines general/group and individual work	1
Allows children to choose their own learning experience/activities	1
Helps identify specific weaknesses of each child	1
Promotes value education, social-affective development	1
Allows the better linkage with the basic education	1

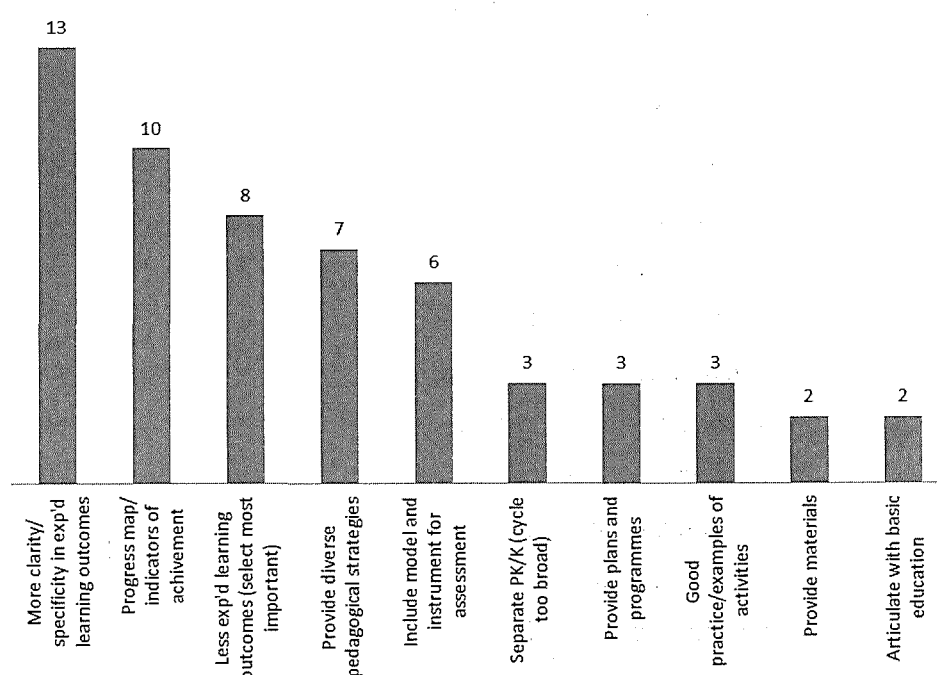
A small number of respondents elaborated on how the curriculum made it difficult for educators to serve the diverse needs of children, and in fact their responses correspond to the general challenges in implementing the curriculum as illustrated earlier: the curriculum is too broad to systematically plan activities, particularly more individualised work (3 respondents); the large numbers of children makes it difficult to attend to the needs of each child (2 respondents); the classroom time is too short to address the large number of expected learning outcomes (2 respondents).

As the educators interviewed for the case studies unanimously stated that the curriculum was adequate for all children, a majority (82%) of pedagogical supervisors agreed, while 18% (9 of 50 valid responses) showed some reservations. The reasons for considering the curriculum adequate for all children were similar to those given to the previous questions: the curriculum is holistic, broad and flexible enough to be adapted to all children. However, five respondents, including those who believed that the curriculum was adequate for all children, pointed out that the curriculum did not address sufficiently children with special educational needs and to a lesser extent the aspect of cultural/ethnic diversity. Others perceived this point differently commenting that the curriculum did address and was adequate for children with special educational needs and also those belonging to different groups. Once again, two respondents said successful curricular implementation for all children was conditional on a manageable number of children in the classroom, because curricular adjustment and adaptation in the context of diversity would require more individualised attention.

Finally, the pedagogical supervisors were asked to suggest ways to improve the content of the curriculum and the implementation process. Although most of them stated the curriculum was adequate for all children and facilitated the educators' work in serving diverse groups of children, more than half reported that educators had encountered difficulties in implementing it. While the difficulties reported were

diverse (see Figure 11), as Figure 14 below illustrates, their suggestions for improvement were concrete, focussing on the need to provide more clarity and specificity to the expected learning outcomes within each nucleus (13 respondents), provide a 'progress map' or indicators of achievement per age group (10 respondents), reduce the number of expected learning outcomes (8 respondents), provide diverse pedagogical strategies (7 respondents) and include the model and instrument for assessment (6 respondents). Other suggestions, such as the separation of learning outcomes between pre-kinder and kinder age groups, the provision of plans and programmes of learning activities similar to those provided by the Ministry of Education for basic and secondary education, and the inclusion of good practice and activity examples, also indicate to educators' need for more guidance on how to plan concrete activities based on an open curriculum.

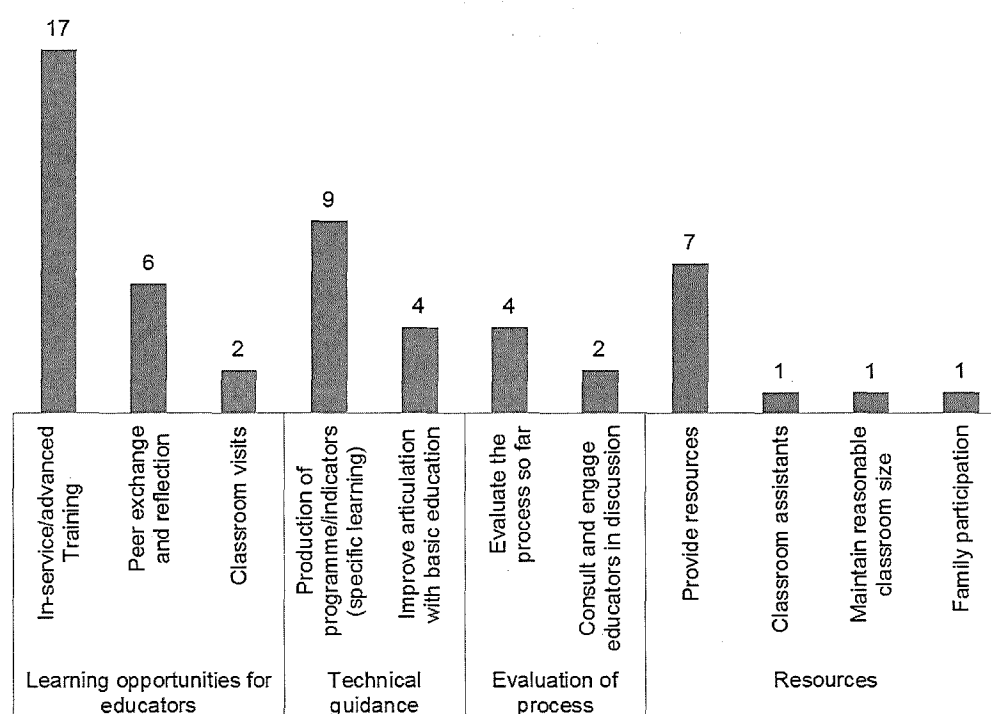
**Figure 14 Pedagogical supervisors' suggestions for improving the content of the curriculum (multiple answers)**



As for the process of curriculum implementation, pedagogical supervisors' suggestions could be grouped into four categories: provision of learning opportunities for educators, provision of technical guidance, evaluation of the implementation process thus far and provision of resources (Figure 15). Of 45 respondents who answered this open-ended question, 17 respondents highlighted the need for advanced training for educators, 6 respondents mentioned other learning

opportunities, such as peer meetings and support for exchange and reflection and 2 respondents suggested visits to other classrooms with successful practice. Much as for the content of the curriculum, respondents also suggested the production of technical documents detailing how to translate learning outcomes into activities and monitor achievement. Some respondents thought that an evaluation of the implementation process could be useful to reflect upon the progress so far and identify areas for improvement. Moreover, several pedagogical supervisors also suggested that in order to improve the curricular implementation and meet its demand, the provision of adequate resources was necessary, including learning materials, equipment (computers) and space (larger classrooms, libraries, audio-visual rooms, etc.) as well as classroom assistants who could support educators.

**Figure 15 Pedagogical supervisors' suggestions for improving the process of the curriculum implementation (multiple answers)**



### 6.5 Perceptions of National Policy-Makers

It was fortunate that I could interview both former and current national co-ordinators of early childhood education of the Ministry of Education. While MC (the former national co-ordinator) led the process of developing and launching the curricular bases, JC (the current national co-ordinator) was also much involved in the process as Executive Director of the INTEGRA Foundation.

In describing the new vision of the child as presented in the curriculum, JC and MC were both emphatic on the conception of the child as a subject of rights, rather than the object of protection, and as an active learner with tremendous potentials.

JC: It's a child that begins to have rights: now it is not only necessary to care and protect him/her but the child should have a space within society, should be considered [and] have their rights...[The] society has to be ready to take these children, because they are children who have rights...

MC: The curricular bases, among important changes, [sought to] instill a powerful concept of the child...Since the concepts of the childhood are socio-historic constructions, what we had to do in the first place, and on which we put a lot of emphasis (and we needed more), is the construction of the more powerful concept of the child: the child is subject-person from birth...

Both of them mentioned that developments in neuroscience and other recent findings had helped illuminate the enormous potential that all children have and the need to provide them with active learning experiences.

JC: They are children with a tremendous potential for learning. Since the public [schools] attended sectors of vulnerable children, a certain prejudice always existed with respect to the potential of these children. Today, we all know that...if the mother had a normal and healthy pregnancy, all children – regardless of if they were born in [a poor municipality] or [a wealthy municipality]– have the same potential for learning.

MC: When we began the [curricular] reform, there was a lot of bad schooling in the sense of a curriculum with the passive role of the child...I would say that the first phase of the installation of the curricular bases, we put an emphasis on facilitating schools with an active role of the child in his/her own learning.

From these perspectives, both JC and MC stressed the need for not only early childhood educators but the whole society –most importantly the family but also social institutions (e.g. museums, libraries)– to realise this new vision and respect children's rights by adjusting themselves (e.g. height of museum exhibition).

With respect to the role of educators in this new context, JC stated that the new focus was given to the role of the educator as a 'mediator of learning':

It is understood from a constructivist, socio-cultural perspective that the child constructs his/her own learning and the adult scaffolds that learning by modelling and mediating, so that the learner can actively acquire his/her own learning...So we no longer talk about activities but learning experiences because we have areas of learning experiences and learning nuclei and stopped organising learning by psychomotor development, emotional development, cognitive development...

MC, for her part, described the role of early childhood educators as a 'mediator of culture', who pick up cultural expressions (e.g. artefacts, history, events) and discuss and investigate them with children as learning experiences. She lamented, however, that the number of educators trained with the new concept of the child was still limited and many were unable to take advantage of their cultural environments – from artwork in the community museum to world events– to provide children with new learning experiences:

The bottom-line challenges were to push up the ceilings, to think that this powerful child would be interested in other things, that is to make visible the themes, technology and what happens in the world and local culture. For example, look at the Olympics in China, with that fantastic opening ceremony...who took advantage of that educationally in our kindergartens? Imagine having that visually! It's not hard at all to tape it: many kindergartens have TV now. So, there was that concept of a little child with only things around him/her and wouldn't be interested. Of course he would be interested because our tennis players and athletes are there, and Fernando González is an idol here, and if Fernando González is in China, it was an opportunity to talk about China, you see? But no...

She attributed such missed opportunities not only to the lack of training but to the general lack of education and cultural experiences:

There is a thing, like culture in general, I feel. [Educators] read little. You see that here at the master's course I send the students to museums, and I ask, 'who has visited museums?' Almost zero...So how can I be a mediator of culture, if I don't know what happens in this world!? So, it's much easier to escape themselves to pseudo-childishness of early childhood education, which is that children like dogs and cats, or dinosaurs and the manta rays, and that's it...

JC noted that there were two positions with respect to the role of educators expected in the curricular implementation: one that expects educators to handle a very open curricular frame to create diverse learning experiences and the other that aims to help educators adapt a less-open curriculum by providing additional guidance and orientations:

There is one tendency that says that the classroom practice should be transformed into continuous training basically, which implies immediately that the educator is capable of making her own programme and her own instruments for assessment...as a function of the emerging needs and classroom projects as a function of children's interests. It is very nice for me too. Another tendency says that surely everyone needs continuous training but the training and the professional quality do not necessarily lie in the orientations and instruments that she has to produce herself to better promote children's learning. So, I can be an excellent educator but all professionals require specific orientations, and based on those orientations and those



programmes, I can create, adapt, incorporate, complement [curricular activities] and incorporate families.

This issue relates to the existing debate on the extent to which the curriculum should be open for interpretation using the educator's creativity, on which MC and JC disagree. JC's belief is that the post-modern approach to the curriculum advocated by MC would be an ideal, but most public schools in Chile do not have the conditions to employ such an open approach and it is important that children coming from disadvantaged family backgrounds have as much and as rigorous a learning experience as possible in kindergarten. She first pointed to the inadequate pre-service training:

She is an educator who mediates learning, is capable of doing her planning, assesses [children] and creates a team...but in practice two things happen: that they don't have the conditions to do it, nor have they the abilities to do it. It's not because they are not capable but because the pre-service training they received at universities in this country is not good...

In addition, JC mentioned the need to provide children with rigorous learning experiences to compensate for their family and social disadvantages:

Chile needs now early childhood education like this; hopefully in the future the only thing we have to think about is to construct learning material or more entertaining toys, so that children have a good time and the educator can have the luxury of spending all morning telling a story or going to a zoo with children and then later telling stories about the zoo...without thinking about phonological awareness or problem solutions...Because [this] is the need of this country, and in this context this more idealistic view of the educator's role does not correspond to the requirements. Education does not need to be instrumentalised...but we need to be very rigorous about the [child's] potential, [because] if not developed in the classroom, it is not developed at home. Why have children in Finland developed their potential? Because they have the cultural capital of the family, the environment and society...And children in Chile? ... [F]or the time being, Chile does not have that opportunity.

Both agreed, however, that the curricular bases enjoyed a high level of acceptance by all levels of educators, particularly because they were constructed in a participatory manner.

JC: Educators are very enthusiastic and committed; and it was an opportunity for updating [their knowledge]. They felt that when they had to learn this, which was a challenge, they valued it positively because they felt that it was an opportunity.

MC: as the curricular bases were done through a very participatory construction process...and the curricular bases essentially presented a vision of pedagogy that I believe that is the duty of all, well everyone says, 'that is

the true pedagogy of early childhood?'... People always took it well, saying 'this is the way I dream that we should all work'.

The curricular bases are valued and owned by educators, 'but then practical problems begin' (MC). The challenges that the national co-ordinators saw in early childhood educators in implementing the curricular bases were diverse; however, both policy-makers mentioned classroom size as the major issue. JC affirmed that given the new vision of the child and the roles expected of the educator, it is absolutely impossible for an educator in charge of as many as forty children. MC was also critical that the official rules still permit a large number of children in the classroom, and it is mainly due to the lack of political will to invest more public funding in this educational level to reduce the classroom size even though she had left prepared the necessary process and decree when she left the Ministry.

MC: Imagine that the rule of the Transition Level still authorises us to have 45 children in the classroom, Still! And in this country, we are talking about quality and have not done what Fidel [Castro] of Cuba has done: Fidel lowered the number of children in basic and preschool education to twenty. How can they not be in the first place [in Latin America]? Let us lower the number of children, so [educators] can work better, have better interactions with children, ask more interesting questions and offer a richer emotional environment, because with 45 [children] you end up shouting at them. So, it's true that the number of children sometimes prevents them from working and they say, 'no, I would like to, but with so many children I can't'.

Other 'practical problems' mentioned by MC are related to school management. For example, school principals often do not allow children's families to be involved in classroom activities or take children off school premises.

[Given the problem of classroom size], you tell her to open yourself to the family, because what the bases say is that family, children and local actors should enter [the classroom]. 'No, the school principal does not allow me to have other people'. It's true. There is no rule that prohibits it, but it is true that basic education school does not allow family to enter the classroom and work with children, which is by practice, because the official policies of the Ministry [of Education] does not say that, so the educator continues alone.

For JC, the new curricular bases were unlikely to make educators' work difficult but they have not oriented them sufficiently. She believed that educators needed more orientations for pedagogical practices due to the broadness of the curricular bases and the Ministry of Education was developing programmes for this purpose:

What happens with the curricular bases is that the learning contexts are so broad that educators had difficulty to work [with the bases] in more systematic and rigorous manner...After designing the curriculum it is necessary to develop programmes, because programmes support and give

more specific orientations to these modalities...Chile is a country that has the major challenge to improve the quality of education. And we have children with high vulnerability, who are put in public education and the truth is that it is their only possibility to equip themselves in terms of capacities and skills...

JC explained that the 'Euro-Western' assumption that each educator should be capable of generating her/his own orientations for specific groups of children is not applicable to all educators in Chile, and their diverse capacities create randomness and inequity in the education quality for children. MC disagreed with this position and believed that the curricular bases should remain 'open', so that educators prepare their own curriculum for the classroom:

The bad thing is that many wanted to close [the curricular bases]. I say, 'what a pity that you don't take advantage of such an open curriculum'...INTEGRA made a very structured curriculum [based on the bases], but lately I learned that they wanted to broaden and set free the curriculum...JINJI maintained more [open]. The Ministry of Education began to make programmes [out of the curricular bases], but very structured programmes also. I resisted a lot while I was [in the Ministry], and later they did these units [of programme] and distributed them. But the loveliest thing is, so you see, that there was a group of educators who refused to apply the units...But, there are all kinds of people: sometimes there are people who are not committed and a little lazy, saying that 'great, they send me something all done'. But there was a sizable group of people here in the Metropolitan Region, who [didn't like] these units that the Ministry of Education sent, which had everything: objectives, activities, materials, stories, songs and all. Well, that was not to consider them professionals of education..., who are capable of assessing their reality, including cultural reality, and make their own curricula. That's what the curricular bases allow them.

Both JC and MC were very aware of each other's perspective and recognised that this is an ongoing tension, as MC remarked, 'like everything in education'. MC pointed out that the problem is the 'cultural issue' in that some educators could 'free themselves from that traditional didactic pedagogy'. She then elaborated on the 'strategies of the other pedagogy':

For example, open questions, questions that create divergent thinking, using good humour, making explicit local culture and starting from what children know already. But you have to ask what children want to know! That other pedagogy of instrumentalist modernity used to give [educators] security. And [this is] a pedagogy of more uncertainty, because that is a postmodern pedagogy...Because educators have been educated that they should give all answers, then if you open the window to the children, [you] will not know how to do; and that is her insecurity, rather than saying...'no one pretend to be an encyclopaedia in this century'. But remember 'learning to learn': so you go with children to the local municipal library, and ask for a book about the mammoth and research together about the mammoth. There, you will

teach them more than the mammoth: that when you don't know about something, there are sources, persons, libraries, video, internet, from which you gain knowledge. But that training of uncertainty, [the possibility] that things I don't control can happen, I think there is a major fear.

Although JC and MC agreed that the curricular bases are adequate for all children and enjoy a high level of acceptance by educators, their views with respect to how 'open' the curriculum should be remained divergent.

In terms of diversity in the classroom, the two interviewees also manifested very different conceptualisations and focus. For JC diversity in the Chilean context was found more prominently in children's socio-economic background than ethnicity (indigenous groups).

The diversity we have is...not necessarily referring to indigenous peoples. These days we have a problem –not so serious but important– with Peruvian immigrants; we have cultural diversity with respect to the children that come from a programme 'Puente Chile Solidario', who are from extreme poverty and who have a particular culture. So I would say that our cultural diversity has more to do with these aspects than those aspects that might be seen in Paraguay, Bolivia or Mexico, which are inter-cultural and bilingual... [In Chile] when children enter schools, all speak Spanish.

JC believed, however, that cultural diversity and the concept of inclusive schools were celebrated in discourse, but there was little differentiation in classroom planning and management:

Regarding diversity, I would differentiate between discourse and what happens in reality, because in discourse [diversity] is valued, and Chile is into this idea of inclusive schools. And inclusive schools or kindergartens show some themes like special educational needs, inter-culturality and gender. But I would say that what I have seen in terms of practice is furnishing [the classroom] with articles belonging to the children's sector. You incorporate in a kindergarten games from the culture, rituals for festivities, using their costumes and songs...it has advanced in terms of incorporating the children's local culture in that way, but it doesn't go beyond that in my opinion. And the tendency is rather, in planning and operating, [the educator] feels that children are all Chileans and all equals.

She suggested that even though cross-cutting themes, such as gender and cultural diversity, were touched upon in the curricular bases in very general terms, specific orientations on how educators could work with special educational needs, multi-cultural groups and gender were not addressed. JC recognised that educators needed the abilities to adjust the curriculum and assessment instruments for children, incorporating more diversified attention within the classroom and working with different groupings of children depending on their needs as well as the classroom

resources. She stressed that in order to attend to the diverse needs of children, educators had to strengthen basic capacities of analysis, critical reflexion and logical thinking, while at the same time building skills in assessment of children's learning.

MC maintained that the issue of diversity was integrated into early childhood education in Chile, but in her view diversity was conceived at the individual level of the child and not sufficiently at the cultural level.

...in Chile [diversity] is already instilled: it is included in teacher training curricula –with different quality, of course–, it is in the national [early childhood education] curriculum, and it is in the educators' mind, because they are always educated to respect a child's interests, characteristics and need. That slogan. But sure, diversity is taken as personal diversity and not cultural diversity.

For MC, in comparison with other countries with strong cultural identity (e.g. Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia), Chile is more Europeanised and the issue of cultural identity has been less prominent because of prejudice or the belief that it is against progress. She believed, however, that early childhood educators saw the importance of such cultural identity for children but did not know how to work with this theme. She, too, observed that in dealing with culture and diversity, educators tended to pick up folkloristic images and songs, which were 'secondary, accessory elements'. She stated that more training and resources were needed for educators to recognise their own cultural identities and incorporate such concept in classroom. MC acknowledged that there were groups of people who resisted the idea of cultural diversity and preferred Chile to be homogeneous and Europeanised. Nonetheless, she found that increasingly students of early childhood education recognised their own ethnic/cultural heritage, which she saw as a positive sign for educators to also be able to recognise children's individual as well as sociocultural diversity. From this perspective, MC affirmed that 'cultural identity' is the key capacity of educators in dealing with and respecting the diversity in the classroom, which needs to be developed through training.

Finally, the question was asked what resources would facilitate educators' work in the curricular implementation and meeting children's diverse learning needs. Both MC and JC pointed out the need to strengthen the educators' own cultural capital, as many of them are lacking general knowledge and the skills necessary for their work as mediators of learning or culture. They also stressed the importance of pre-service training and were engaged in training new generations of educators at universities:

JC: there are educators with professional titles, Mami, who speak poorly...they say '*la calor* [instead of the masculine definite article '*el calor*']'...there is so much disparity [among educators], also in terms of in-service training. There are people who come to work with children with a professional title, and they don't know how to write...I give classes at a university of some prestige and the students, when writing their theses, they don't know how to write...They can't. They graduate after four years in a prestigious private university in early childhood education. They don't know how to write, put down their ideas...they have never done research...

MC believed that training opportunities available to educators were still insufficient mainly because the limited governmental resources could not reach the large number of existing teacher training institutes. She suggested one idea to mitigate this problem would be the provision of educational materials, such as books, CDs and slides, for educators for their own learning:

not so much of materials to work with children, but for the educator herself, who has had this bad cultural formation, and who doesn't have time...so, if she doesn't read or study, perhaps this kind of material [would be useful]...because, sure, maybe that educator who is in Santiago has never been or will not go to Easter Island. So she won't be in the conditions to tell the story about Easter Island without doing some research. But if we provide them with a CD or a PowerPoint, which contains photos of Easter Island or shows the history, which she can give to children and she herself can learn...it can facilitate her work.

## 7. Discussion

This chapter brings together the findings from the analysis of the five data sets, and in so doing, it aims to illustrate how the child's learning is conceived –in Bronfenbrenner's terms– in the microsystem (e.g. the family, classrooms), the mesosystem (e.g. relations between school and home), the exosystem (e.g. social institutions) and the macrosystem (e.g. education policy, history and culture of Chile). The sociocultural theoretical perspective is useful here because it explains not only how the child learns and develops through participation in sociocultural activities but also how educators make sense of the competing demands and needs in their classrooms and implement the curriculum in their particular sociocultural contexts. The research findings are discussed according to the four specific research questions.

### *Specific question 1: What challenges do early childhood educators face in implementing the Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases?*

The Curricular Bases clearly enjoy a high level of acceptance and appreciation by the educators in the case studies as well as the pedagogical supervisors surveyed. All educators and a large majority of pedagogical supervisors believed that the curricular bases were adequate for all children, although some pointed out the lack of guidance to support children with special educational needs. Educators and pedagogical supervisors seemed to view the curriculum as a relevant and useful guiding tool, rather than a burden imposed from above. On the other hand, the educators' perception of the 'openness' of this curriculum appears contradictory: they appreciate its flexibility that allows the organisation and adjustment of learning activities according to children's interests and abilities; at the same time educators expressed their difficulties in sequencing and adjusting the large number of expected learning outcomes. This finding confirms the observation of Bustos et al. (2006) that educators lack pedagogical innovations and continue wanting materials and resources that tell them 'what', 'how' and 'when'. In fact, both educators and pedagogical supervisors expressed this dilemma and desired methodological guidelines to help them translate expected learning outcomes into concrete activities. This dilemma also reflects the existing tensions in early childhood education policies mentioned in the Section 2.1, particularly the degree to which the post-modernist approach to open and co-constructive curricula is realisable. The two national co-ordinators diverged in their position in how to address this tension: one insisting on

keeping the curriculum open in belief of the educator's capacity, while the other taking a pragmatic approach in providing what the educator needs now.

Pedagogical supervisors and the two national co-ordinators also raised educators' challenges derived from structural issues –in particular class size– as the obstacles for the educators' work. Some educators did mention the difficulty of managing a large number of children in general terms, however, rather than in regards to implementing the curriculum. In addition, the classroom observations gave the impression that the duration of children's actual learning time during the half-day classes was short mainly due to some children's late arrival and the waiting time between activities. The large number of children in the classroom and the scarcity of time, as highlighted in the Section 2.2 (Gupta, 2006; Hargreaves, 1994), are recurring complaints of educators. While these structural problems may not be solved easily due to the large financial implications, some mitigating strategies can be identified, for example educators can involve classroom assistants as well as family and community members to provide more personalised attention to children, lead different activities while waiting for other children to be ready for the next activity, and participate in and extend child-initiated activities.

Some educators mentioned the pressure from the school and even the municipality to work on the academic subjects of language and mathematics, which left less time for other learning nuclei. This challenge also resonates with research findings from other countries (see Section 2.4), in which the educators struggled to reconcile the child-centred pedagogic approach and the academically oriented curricular demand. An additional element to be considered, however, is how efficiently each child's time is used in the classroom. The two educators in Temuco are a case in point: Loreto, a veteran educator, conducted mostly whole-class activities in a didactic manner but children were constantly and actively engaged, while Mariana, less experienced but fully trained in the new curriculum, provided more individualised pedagogical interactions with children but she also ended up keeping other children waiting for a long time between activities. The educators in the case studies thus employed diverse ways of making sense of the new curriculum and balancing the competing educational objectives in their sociocultural contexts.

The application of ECERS-R and ECERS-E shows that the overall quality of the classroom environment except the child-adult interactions subscale was at the



minimally adequate level in all the four classrooms, and the overall scores on ECERS-E were clearly lower. One classroom (Santiago pre-kinder) was assessed as inadequate on all ECERS-E subscales and minimal on all assessed ECERS-R subscales. In all the classrooms, the two ECERS-E subscales –science and environment, and diversity– were assessed as inadequate, implying the need to improve the curricular area of ‘living things and their surrounding’ and educators’ inclusive teaching practice. Given that the pedagogical supervisors surveyed also attached low importance to the ‘living things and their surrounding’ and ‘human groups, their lifestyles and relevant events’, school-wide awareness and actions are needed toward children’s integrated learning.

It was also found that the availability of materials and in-service training opportunities were unequal among schools: while both educators in the Arica and Santiago schools were satisfied with the materials and training opportunities they had received, the educators in Temuco were not. It would be useful to review the following aspects in case of Temuco: the distribution of material resources within the region, the support of local governments and universities in organising in-service training, and the systematic peer support and mutual learning mechanism within each school.

***Specific question 2: What challenges do the educators face in meeting the needs of diverse children and how are they overcoming them?***

The educators in the case studies perceived diversity first in terms of children’s family backgrounds that could affect their attitudes and learning dispositions (e.g. socio-economic status, family composition, intra-family problems) and then in terms of their different learning rhythms and styles. The pedagogical supervisors, too, mentioned children’s socioeconomic backgrounds most frequently as what characterised the diversity in their schools, followed by special education needs. The resulting challenge for educators to meet the needs of diverse children is to ensure that all children learn despite the low parental and family awareness and support, and the children’s different levels of knowledge and abilities.

With respect to the parental and family awareness and support, educators elaborated on the problems that affected children’s learning: lack of behavioural norms and moral values taught at home, not bringing children to class on time, absence in meetings of parents and guardians and not acting on the educators’ suggestion to

seek specialised help (e.g. hyper-activity, attention deficiency). Irena's comment is memorable: 'children don't give me a problem but parents do'. This challenge deserves an attention of the school management and the government, given the crucial role played by parents during early childhood and the importance of workforce development to support such parental role (Evangelou *et al*, 2008).

The educators employ a variety of strategies in dealing with children's different learning rhythms and styles, and the most frequently cited strategies are personalised attention and curricular adjustment. Teachers had frequent one-on-one interactions with children and paid special attention to those with particular needs (e.g. Sylvia asking students struggling with number sequences to count children). However, during my classroom observations, regardless of individual differences, children were involved in the same activities and given the same materials. Some educators stressed the importance of good diagnostics and assessment of children's abilities and mentioned that staying with the same class for two years (pre-kinder and kinder) –and this took place in all the schools visited– also helped them know the children's characteristics and adjust the curriculum and teaching methods accordingly.

These perspectives of the educators and pedagogical supervisors seem to be centred on the individual child and his/her proximal environment, that is, the child's microsystem (the family) and mesosystem (relations between the family and the classroom) to use Bronfenbrenner's terms. Children's sociocultural identities, such as gender, ethnicity, religion and nationality, were not taken into account as the elements for recognising their diversity or differentiating teaching practice. In fact, what Josefina (Arica) and Loreto (Temuco) mentioned led me to conclude that they believed that ignoring children's different cultural backgrounds was desirable as an *equality* pedagogy –and crucially not a culturally appropriate *equity* pedagogy:

Josefina: I do not [differentiate] children, for example, who are indigenous descendents because they have different characteristics or customs: they are involved [in classroom] equally as the boy who lives only with his dad, or the girl whose mother is drug-addict, or the boy whose mother works all day and is never seen at home, or the boy who lives with a grandmother, or whose mother is in prison, because all these are my realities.

When Loreto was showing me a child's portfolio of project activities, I saw an activity sheet with the title 'the Easter Week' and a big cross coloured by the child. I asked her whether all children here were Christian, and my question seemed to have

puzzled her. She responded, 'Here there are Catholics and Protestants but there is no difference. Here there is no different in races, religions, cultures...' Even though recent immigrants and non-Christian residents may have been few in the school community, it seems that it had not occurred to Loreto that students might have different or no religions and the Easter would be culturally irrelevant to them. In other words, educators seem to hold a standardised image of children and do not question, understand or respond to their macrosystem cultural differences.

Both national co-ordinators confirmed that educators focussed on the diversity at the individual level and not a wider socio-cultural context (i.e. macrosystem). JC (current national co-ordinator) stated that cultural diversity in the classroom was valued but remained in discourse and content integration, which was confirmed by my classroom observations. MC (former national co-ordinator), too, maintained that despite cultural diversity being integrated in the early childhood education curriculum and teacher training curricula, educators continued focusing on the individual diversity and merely picking up 'secondary, accessory elements'. Both JC and MC highlighted the need to strengthen early childhood educators' generic knowledge and capacities, such as analytical skills and reflective and critical thinking. MC added that educators' understanding of their own 'cultural identity' itself is a key capacity that would equip them better in dealing with and respecting the diversity in the classroom.

***Specific question 3: What elements of the Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases facilitate or challenge the work of the educators to serve the needs of diverse groups of children?***

The educators and a large majority of the pedagogical supervisors surveyed believe that the Curricular Bases facilitate the work of the educators because they provide a flexible framework within which educators can adjust the curriculum for the needs of diverse children. The Curricular Bases thus help teachers plan activities systematically but flexibly by selecting learning outcomes and modifying teaching methods and resources. When challenges are mentioned, they do not refer to the relation between the Curricular Bases and the need of diverse groups of children: they either refer to the general challenge of implementing the Curricular Bases or teaching children with different learning rhythms.

The interview with the educators and the survey of pedagogical supervisors also indicate their high level of awareness of the new vision of the child and the role of the early childhood educator presented in the Curricular Bases. They emphasise the child as a rights' holder who can and should take active part in constructing his/her own learning, building upon prior knowledge. They also understand that the role of the early childhood educator is that of a mediator or facilitator of the child's learning. These responses reflect the constructivist perspective of the child's learning and development. However, their perspectives are focussed on the individual child and his/her immediate environment of home and classroom. In other words, layers of sociocultural contexts of children's learning and development are not sufficiently taken into account but largely restricted to the microsystem of the classroom.

In contrast, MC states that the early childhood educator should be a 'mediator of culture' who discusses and investigates with children cultural experiences of not only the local community but also beyond the immediate environment. She stresses that the whole society, including social institutions that surround children (i.e. 'exosystem'), has to change. Moreover, her broader perspective is idealistic but coherent with the sociocultural theoretical perspective that considers human development and learning as 'changing participation in sociocultural activities of their communities' (Rogoff, 2003, p. 52). During the school visits, some investigative activities that involved families, local institutions or even a foreign culture were observed: poster presentations on *Fiestas Patrias* by students (Temuco), a visit to a local anthropological museum (Arica) and writing names in Japanese (Temuco). The educator's role as an 'energiser of the educational communities to be organised around young children's learning requirements' is considered to be a fundamental professional duty in the Curricular Bases (Chile Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 14) but going beyond the microsystem level remains to be a challenge for many educators.

***Specific question 4: To what extent is the effective pedagogy practiced by Chilean educators?***

The analysis of the effective pedagogy was informed by the REPEY study (Siraj-Blatchford *et al.*, 2002), which itself was built on an extensive literature review and identified effective pedagogical interactions associated with child social/behavioural and cognitive outcomes. The REPEY study found that the most effective settings

balanced equally adult-initiated and child-initiated activities and encouraged 'sustained shared thinking', though the latter does not happen very often. Moreover, adults' extending child-initiated play activities was especially effective but rarely occurred in practice.

The observation of the six classrooms –which can be considered to be 'typical' rather than exceptionally effective– reveals that the classroom activities are predominantly adult-initiated and mainly consist of whole-class activities and individual exercises, with very few activities in small groups. Although the educators mentioned during the interviews that they adjusted and differentiated the curriculum to meet children's diverse needs, the children were engaged in the same activities and given the same materials during the observed adult-led activities. In fact, all of the four classrooms were assessed 'inadequate' on the item 'planning for individual learning needs' of the ECERS-E diversity sub-scale. This observation confirms the finding by Bustos et al. (2006) that the conceptual change introduced by the new Curricular Bases in Chile did not take place in practice and educators continued to be the protagonists in the classroom. Moreover, child-initiated activities were restricted to free play: indoor activities took place when children waited for other children to arrive or finish individual assignments, and outdoor free play did not take place every day due to time constraints. In other words, the classrooms observed mostly consisted of high teacher involvement and low children's choice. This observation, too, shows a discrepancy between the educators' practice and their understanding of the concept of the child underlying the Curricular Bases as an active learner who initiates and constructs his/her own learning.

In general, the educators did not participate in indoor free play. Only one educator (Irena in Arica) participated in a play activity freely chosen by children; and she extended it for instructional purposes by reminding children of the need to respect rules and discussing with them the pictures on the cards they were playing with, which happened to correspond to the theme of the month. Therefore, adults' extending child-initiated play activities or 'teaching through play' was indeed rare in the classrooms observed, as was the case in the REPEY study.

Adult-to-child 'instructional' pedagogical interactions were common among all the six classrooms, except 'reading' which took place infrequently and only in three out of the six classrooms. The predominance of closed questions, except one educator

(Irena in Arica) who often asked open-ended questions, is an indication of the relatively low occurrence of sustained shared thinking. Open-ended questioning was found associated with better cognitive achievement in the REPEY study, and therefore it should be more encouraged in the classroom.

Unlike 'instruction', the educators differed greatly in terms of their observed episodes of sustained shared thinking: Irena (Arica), Sylvia (Santiago) and Mariana (Temuco) were observed to be engaged in these interactions more frequently than the others, though the observation time for Josefina (Arica) and Loreto (Temuco) was very short. Some of the most sophisticated pedagogy, such as extending and scaffolding, were notably absent in the classrooms. The educators employed, however, pedagogical interactions that were not given specific mention in the REPEY study but required sustained shared thinking and the educators' engagement with the children's prior knowledge. The three methods coded 'delegate to help other children', 'meta-cognition' and 'reinforcement' can be effective in helping children be conscious of their own learning, by helping others achieve what they have successfully done, reflecting upon what they have learnt and being reminded of what they already know.

Sustained shared thinking is a powerful pedagogical form through which educators help learners become conscious of their own learning and thus improve their learning dispositions. On the other hand, the fact that sustaining shared thinking, particularly of the most sophisticated and effective forms, was uncommon and uneven among the educators observed points to the need for educators to improve and practice systematically this pedagogical art. Although Chile's Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases have a chapter 'Context for learning and: criteria and orientations' (Op. cit. pp. 97-98), which includes short general orientations on adult-child and peer interactions, they address mainly social rather than pedagogical interactions. In other words, the Curricular Bases that provide primarily what children should achieve (i.e. expected learning outcomes) need to be accompanied with pedagogical guidance on how to effectively facilitate the learning.

## 8. Conclusions

This research aimed to respond to the following general question:

How do early childhood educators in Chile implement the national Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases to meet the needs of diverse groups of children?

The implementation of the national curriculum is a process in which educators construct their own knowledge, beliefs and practice by experiencing and participating in their particular sociocultural and historical contexts. This research shed light on educators' experiences and challenges encountered in this process. Through this research I witnessed the educators' admirable commitment to their profession and genuine concern for the well-being, learning and development of children who were inserted in disadvantaged and vulnerable situations. This research also testifies the educators' high acceptance and appreciation of the Curricular Bases, which not only offer orientations for their work with children but also demand educators a high level of professionalism, innovations and constant learning.

The findings of this research suggest several elements for reflection in the curriculum implementation process as well as teacher training. First, educators continue asking for non-prescriptive support materials for planning activities, even though such materials do exist (e.g. Chile Ministerio de Educación, 2009; Chile Ministry of Education, 2007). However, this research found that the availability of materials, opportunities for training and peer support mechanisms are uneven; and this has to be reviewed both by the local administration (regional/provincial/municipal) as well as within each school.

Second, within the theoretical framework of the sociocultural theory and inclusive education, the research findings also indicate that the educators need to further broaden their perspective beyond the microsystem of the classroom. On one hand, they need to help children be exposed to and participate in broader sociocultural activities; but to do so, educators themselves need to be explorative, innovative and open for sociocultural activities in distal environments. On the other hand, they need to be critical and analytical about their concept of diversity in the classroom. By focussing on particular individual characteristics and learning styles, educators are unconsciously looking for deviations from a standardised image of children. It is, however, important to recognise the learners' sociocultural characteristics and

modify their pedagogical practice accordingly: an equality pedagogy is not the same as an equity pedagogy.

Third, the research findings also evidenced the existing tensions related to early childhood education policies. Chile's national early childhood education curriculum encourages the constructivist, developmentally appropriate approach to early childhood education, including child-centred/initiated and play-based practice, and a national policy-maker even advocates for the post-modern conceptualisation of the child. However, classroom educators face practical problems, such as the large classroom size and the short duration of effective teaching-learning time, in addition to the pressure from the management –and the actual needs for children in disadvantaged situations– to spend more time on academically oriented content. Such tension, as also observed in India (Gupta, 2006), South Korea (Kwon, 2004), the UK (Hodson and Keating, 2007; Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford and Johnson, 1992) and the USA (Goldstein, 2007), demonstrates educators' constant struggles and negotiation with competing dominant education policy discourses.

Finally, this research brought together three dimensions in analysing pedagogical practice, diversity, pedagogical interactions and activity structure, which are intimately connected to one another. In so doing, additional elements of sustained shared thinking were identified to complement those used in the REPEY study. The conclusion of this research is that inclusiveness and effectiveness of pedagogy are two sides of the same coin: when educators interact with children in the way to support their socioculturally diverse learning needs (inclusiveness) and engage them in sustained shared thinking (effectiveness), the learners are constructing their own learning and transforming their participation in sociocultural activities.

Chile has a highly acclaimed early childhood education system, and the Curricular Bases are a model for other countries in Latin America. However, research on the implementation of the Curricular Bases is very scarce and it is practically non-existent in the English-language literature. I hope that this research makes a contribution to the knowledge in this particular domain while theoretically advancing the linkage between inclusive education and effective pedagogy.

The limitation of this research is the fact that the observation time was short and the classrooms selected as 'typical cases' for visits were less visibly diverse than



expected. While the methodological and data triangulation compensated for this limitation with 'breadth' to some extent, a different approach to this research would ensure sufficient 'depth': to spend a longer time observing the classrooms and perhaps even a larger number of classrooms. Moreover, time has passed since the data collection, and it is now already ten years since the Curricular Bases were launched. Educators have accumulated more experiences using the curriculum, there have been many initiatives and publications and there are more graduates now in classrooms who received pre-service training with the new curriculum. In 2010, a right-wing government replaced the centre-left coalition that had governed the country since the restoration of democracy in 1990, and at the time of writing, Chile is witnessing a large student and citizen manifestation demanding quality of education in public schools. Therefore, future research may document recent policy changes and different experiences of educators.

Implications of this research reflect directly on my professional role as a UNESCO programme specialist in early childhood care and education. This research was an opportunity to see what happens to the 'policy as a discourse' (Ball, 2000) at the classroom level. Since UNESCO's mandate focuses on national-level policy development and implementation, our counterparts tend to be government policy-makers or established civil society organisations (e.g. research institutes, universities, teacher training institutes) at the central level. The research gave me a precious opportunity to dialogue with the national policy-makers (national co-ordinators of early childhood education at the Ministry of Education), regional co-ordinators of early childhood education at the regional secretariats of the Ministry, school principals and pedagogical supervisors, and the principal classroom-level actors: educators and children.

As a result, when I work with policy-makers and researchers today, I am more conscious of what may or may not take place at different levels: the national-level policy discourse, the intermediary, meso-level administrators and teacher trainers at the decentralised level and the classroom-level practice. And I have more awareness about the important influence exerted by educators' and children's sociocultural contexts (e.g. family, community, institutions). Ultimately, in trying to understand the relations between the national education policy and classroom practice, this

research allowed me to glimpse the complex interactions between different levels of distal and proximal environments in Bronfenbrenner's concentric ecological model:

The challenge for international early childhood researchers and practitioners from a socio-cultural perspective is to establish and maintain a dialectical relationship in which researchers, practitioner and policy-makers increase their dialogue and co-construct common educational goals for a society's youngest members (Fleer, Anning and Cullen, 2004, p. 189).

The success of curricular implementation depends not only on the technical soundness of the document and its rollout process (i.e. consultations, teacher training, material distribution) but also on the sociocultural contexts and participation therein of educators and learners. And there were moments of hope and awe that I witnessed, trembling in the cold corners of unheated classrooms, in which at least some of those children growing up in very disadvantaged and vulnerable circumstances were experiencing life-changing moments of learning and living in interaction with their educators.

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### Appendix 1 Structure of the Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases

The first level is the areas of learning experiences within which all early childhood education actions are organised: personal and social formation, communication, and relation with national and cultural environment. Within each of the three areas of learning experiences, general objectives of the learning are formulated as “learning nuclei”, and each learning nucleus represents a set of capacity, values and knowledge that each child should aim at developing through early childhood education. While these first two levels provide broad categories, the third level specifies the learning outcomes that the child is expected to demonstrate and the pedagogic orientations (theories, guidance and possible activities) for educators. The third level is divided into two cycles corresponding to the age groups (birth to 3 years and 3 years to 6 years or entry to basic education).

For example, for the first learning nucleus “Autonomy”, there are 16 expected learning outcomes for the first cycle (e.g. to adapt to certain basic routines related to eating, waking, sleeping and hygiene in a context that is different from his/her home and to be conscious of his/her personal needs) and 6 pedagogic orientations. In the second cycle of the same learning nuclei, there are 21 expected learning outcomes related to motor skills and healthy lifestyles on one hand (e.g. to co-ordinate fine psychomotor skills with more precision and efficiency, stimulating and developing necessary co-ordination skills according to his/her interests to explore, construct and express graphically his/her representations and recreations), and initiative and confidence on the other (e.g. to propose games and activities, suggesting how to organise and play them according to his/her interests and ideas). There are 13 pedagogic orientations for the second cycle of “Autonomy”.

<b>Areas of Learning Experiences</b> A set of substantive opportunities that the curriculum has to consider	<b>Learning Nuclei (General Objectives)</b> Focus of experiences and learning within each area: a general objective is identified for each focus	<b>Expected Learning and Pedagogic Orientations</b> Organised in two cycles: what children are expected to learn and criteria to manage activities to achieve expected results	
Personal and social formation	Autonomy	First Cycle	Second Cycle
	Identity	First Cycle	Second Cycle
	Living together	First Cycle	Second Cycle
Communication	Verbal language	First Cycle	Second Cycle
	Artistic language	First Cycle	Second Cycle
Relation with natural and cultural environment	Living things and their surrounding	First Cycle	Second Cycle
	Human groups, their lifestyles and relevant events	First Cycle	Second Cycle
	Logical-mathematic relations and quantification	First Cycle	Second Cycle

(Source: Chile Ministry of Education, 2001)

### Appendix 2 Chile: Basic Country Information

	<b>Chile</b>	<b>Ref. year</b>	<b>Source</b>
Total population (thousands)	Both sexes: 17,295 Male: 8,553 Female: 8,742	2011	(ECLAC, 2006)
Gross national product per capita (Current US\$)	9,400	2008	World Bank data in (UNESCO, 2011)
Gross national product per capita (PPP US\$)	13,270	2008	
Annual population growth	National: 0.89% Urban: 1.06% Rural: -0.43%	2010-2015	(ECLAC, 2006)
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	1.89	2010-2015	
Life expectancy at birth	Both sexes: 79.1 Male: 76.1 Female: 82.2	2010-2015	
Population below the poverty line (includes indigent population)	Total: 11.5% Urban: 11.7% Rural: 10.4%	2009	
Population below the indigent line	Total: 3.6% Urban: 3.5% Rural: 4.4%	2009	
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	18	2000-2009	(WHO, 2011)
Infant (under 1 yr) mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	Both sexes: 7 Male: 7 Female: 7	2008	
Child (under 5 yrs) mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	Both sexes: 8 Male: 9 Female: 8	2008	
HIV prevalence (% of population ages 15-49)	0.4%	2009	
Public expenditure on education as percentage of GDP	4.0%	2008	
Public expenditure on education as percentage of total government expenditure	18.2%	2007	(UIS, 2005)
Distribution of public expenditure per level	Pre-primary: 11% Basic: 49% Secondary: 26% Tertiary: 14%	2008	
Adult literacy rates (population aged 15 years and over)	Both sexes: 98.6% Male: 98.6% Female: 98.5%	2009	(UIS, 2005)
Youth literacy rates (population 15-24 years of age)	Both sexes: 98.9% Male: 98.9% Female: 98.9%	2009	
Gross enrolment in pre-primary education (UIS data)	Both sexes: 55% Male: 54% Female: 56%	2008	

Net enrolment in pre-primary education (UIS data)	Both sexes: 52% Male: 51% Female: 54%	2008	
Distribution of pre-primary enrolment according to administrative type	Municipal: 42.1% Subsidised private: 46.6% Paid private: 11.3	2007	(Chile Ministry of Education, 2010)
Percentage of female teachers at pre-primary level	95.5%	2008	

**PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES**



Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/chile/maps/chile-political-map.jpg>

### Appendix 3 Survey Questionnaire (English translation)

#### 1. About your institution /kindergarten

1.1 Comuna/Localidad: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

1.2 Administration: ☐ Municipal; ☐ Particular subvencionado; ☐ Particular pagado

1.3 The year in your preschool was established: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. About the educators in your setting

2.1 Number of adults in your setting: educators \_\_\_\_\_ helpers (auxiliares) \_\_\_\_\_

2.2 What languages do your educators use in your classrooms?

☐ Spanish only

☐ Non-Spanish language only  $\Rightarrow$  Which language(s): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Spanish and non-Spanish language(s):

$\Rightarrow$  Spanish: \_\_\_\_ %; Other language(s): specify: \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_ %

2.3 Please describe the qualifications and experiences of educators in your setting.

	Highest level of education obtained	Number of years of working experience as an early childhood educator
Educator 1		
Educator 2		
Educator 3		
Educator 4		
Educator 5		
Educator 6		

#### 3. Diversity in your school

1.1 Do you consider children in your school culturally diverse (in terms of children's gender, ethnicity, linguistic and cultural background, socioeconomic background, special educational needs, etc.) ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please describe the diversity in your setting:

1.2 Does your school have specific policies or guidelines related to the diversity of children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If "Yes", please describe the policies/guidelines or attach a copy to this form; If "No", please comment on the need and appropriateness of having such policies/guidelines.

- 1.3 What challenges do you and the educators in your school face in working with the diversity of children?

- 1.4 What do you and the educators do to overcome these challenges?

- 1.5 Is your school provided with sufficient resources (including information, material resources, and training) for educators to meet the learning needs of ALL children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If "No", please explain what additional resources would facilitate the educators' work.

- 1.6 How do you involve families and communities in classroom activities (chose all answers)?

- ☐ Help educators as classroom assistants
- ☐ Supervision of outdoor activities
- ☐ Help children as interpreters
- ☐ Provide emotional support to children who are new to the classroom
- ☐ Tell children stories and demonstrate cultural traditions
- ☐ Help the preparation of meals and snacks
- ☐ Participate in planning children's learning activities
- ☐ Participate in evaluation of learning activities
- ☐ Families and communities are not generally involved in classroom activities
- ☐ Other types of involvement (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

- 1.7 In your opinion, *what are the key capacities* of preschool educators to meet the diverse needs of ALL children in the classroom and *why*?

#### 4. Implementation of the Bases Curriculares de Educación Parvularia

4.1 Are the Bases Curriculares de Educación Parvularia (BCEP) implemented in your centre?

Yes ☐ ⇒ Since when (month/year)? \_\_\_\_\_ ⇒ *Continue to Question 4.2*

No ☐ ⇒ Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ⇒ *Go to Question 5*

4.2 Please number the following learning nuclei of the BCEP in the order of priority you give for the children in your setting (put the number 1 to 8, with 1 being the highest priority)

Autonomy	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Living together	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Verbal language	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Artistic language	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Living things and their surrounding		<input type="checkbox"/>
Human groups, their lifestyles and relevant events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Logical-mathematic relations and quantification		<input type="checkbox"/>

4.3 Does the BCEP present a new vision of children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

4.4 Has the BCEP changed the role of educators in your setting?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

4.5 Have the educators encountered any difficulty implementing the BCEP?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please describe the difficulties encountered:

4.6 Has the BCEP facilitated the work of educators in serving the needs of diverse groups of children in particular?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If "Yes", please explain in what ways it has facilitated the work; if "No", please explain what the remaining challenges are:

4.7 Has the BCEP made difficult the work of educators in serving the diverse needs of children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

4.8 In your opinion, is the BCEP adequate for ALL children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

4.9 In your opinion, how could the *content* of the BCEP be improved?

4.10 In your opinion, how could the *processes* of the BCEP implementation be improved?

## 5. Characteristics of children in your setting

5.1 Number of children enrolled: Total: \_\_\_\_\_ (Boys: ; Girls \_\_\_\_\_)



5.2 Number of children whose mother tongue is NOT Spanish: \_\_\_\_\_

5.3 Number of children who is NOT of Chilean nationality: \_\_\_\_

5.4 Number of children belonging to ethnic groups (put the number under each group):

Alacalufe	Atacameño	Aimara	Colla	Mapuche	Quechua	Rapa Nui	Yámana	Otros

5.5 Number of children with special educational needs: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Appendix 4 Interview Schedule for Educators (English translation)

##### 1. Diversity in your classroom

- 1.1 What do you understand by children's 'diversity' in the context of your work?
- 1.2 What challenges do you have in the classroom, working with the children's diversity?
- 1.3 What do you do to overcome those challenges?
- 1.4 Do you have sufficient resources (e.g. information, material resources, training) to meet the learning needs of ALL children?  
Yes ☐  
No ☐ ⇒ Please explain what additional resources would facilitate your work
- 1.5 In what ways do families and communities participate in classroom activities?
- 1.6 In your opinion, what are the key capacities that an early childhood educator should have to meet the needs of ALL children in the classroom?

##### 2. Implementation of the Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases (BCEP)

- 2.1 Do the BCEP present a new vision of children?  
Yes ☐ No ☐  
Please explain your answer:
- 2.2 Have the BCEP changed the role of educators?  
Yes ☐ No ☐  
Please explain your answer:
- 2.3 Have you encountered any difficulty in implementing the BCEP?  
Yes ☐ No ☐  
Please explain your answer:
- 2.4 Have the BCEP particularly facilitated your work as an educator in meeting the needs of diverse groups of children?  
Yes ☐ ⇒ Please explain in what way they facilitated your work:  
No ☐ ⇒ Please explain what other challenges you have:
- 2.5 Have the BCEP challenged your work as an educator in meeting the diverse needs of children?  
Yes ☐ No ☐  
Please explain your answer:
- 2.6 In your opinion, do the BCEP adequate for ALL children?  
Yes ☐ No ☐  
Please explain your answer:
- 2.7 How do you assess children's development and learning?

2.8 In your opinion, how could the *content* of the BCEP be improved?

2.9 In your opinion, how could the implementation process of the BCEP be improved?

## Appendix 5 Interview Schedule for National Co-ordinator of Early Childhood Education at Ministry of Education (English translation)

### 1. Implementation of the Early Childhood Education Curricular Bases (BCEP)

1.1 Do the BCEP present a new vision of children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

1.2 Have the BCEP changed the role of educators?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

1.3 Have educators encountered any difficulty in implementing the BCEP?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

1.4 Have the BCEP particularly facilitated educators' work in meeting the needs of diverse groups of children?

Yes ☐ ⇒ Please explain in what way they facilitated their work:

No ☐ ⇒ Please explain what other challenges their have:

1.5 Have the BCEP challenged the work of educators in meeting the diverse needs of children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

1.6 In your opinion, do the BCEP adequate for ALL children?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please explain your answer:

1.7 How do you assess children's development and learning?

1.8 In your opinion, how could the *content* of the BCEP be improved?

1.9 In your opinion, how could the implementation process of the BCEP be improved?

### 2. Diversity in the classroom

2.1 In your observation, what challenges do early childhood educators have in the classroom, working with the children's diversity?

2.2 What do educators do to overcome those challenges?

2.3 What resources (e.g. information, material resources, training) do they have to meet the learning needs of ALL children?

*Are they sufficient?*

Yes ☐

No ☐ ⇒ Please explain what additional resources would facilitate your work

2.4 In what ways do families and communities participate in classroom activities?

2.5 In your opinion, what are the key capacities that an early childhood educator should have to meet the needs of ALL children in the classroom?

**Appendix 6 The full scores of the ECERS-E and the partial ECERS-R**

Scale	Subscale	Item	Arica Pre-K	Santiago Pre-K	Santiago K	Temuco Pre-K	Average
R	Personal Care Routines	9. Greeting/departing	4	7	7	1	4.75
R	Personal Care Routines	10. Meals/snacks	1	1	1	4	1.75
R	Personal Care Routines	11. Nap/rest	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
R	Personal Care Routines	12. Toileting/diapering	1	2	2	7	3.00
R	Personal Care Routines	13. Health practices	7	7	5	7	6.50
R	Personal Care Routines	14. Safety practices	7	1	1	4	3.25
R	Interaction	29. Supervision of gross motor activities	7	1	1	7	4.00
R	Interaction	30. General supervision of children	6	5	6	7	6.00
R	Interaction	31. Discipline	6	5	5	7	5.75
R	Interaction	32. Staff-child interactions	7	7	7	7	7.00
R	Interaction	33. Interactions among children	6	6	6	7	6.25
R	Programme Structure	34. Schedule	4	2	2	2	2.50
R	Programme Structure	35. Free play	4	5	6	4	4.75
R	Programme Structure	36. Group time	2	4	4	4	3.50
R	Programme Structure	37. Provisions for children with disabilities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
R	Parents and Staff	38. Provisions for parents	4	4	4	4	4.00
R	Parents and Staff	39. Provision for personal needs of staff	4	2	2	6	3.50
R	Parents and Staff	40. Provision for professional needs of staff	6	3	3	4	4.00
R	Parents and Staff	41. Staff interaction and cooperation	7	5	5	5	5.50
R	Parents and Staff	42. Supervision and evaluation of staff	3	3	3	3	3.00
R	Parents and Staff	43. Opportunities for professional growth	6	4	4	1	3.75
E	Literacy	1. 'Environmental print' letters and words	4	3	6	4	4.25
E	Literacy	2. Books and literacy areas	4	2	2	1	2.25
E	Literacy	3. Adult reading with the children	1	1	5	1	2.00
E	Literacy	4. Sounds in words	1	1	3	3	2.00

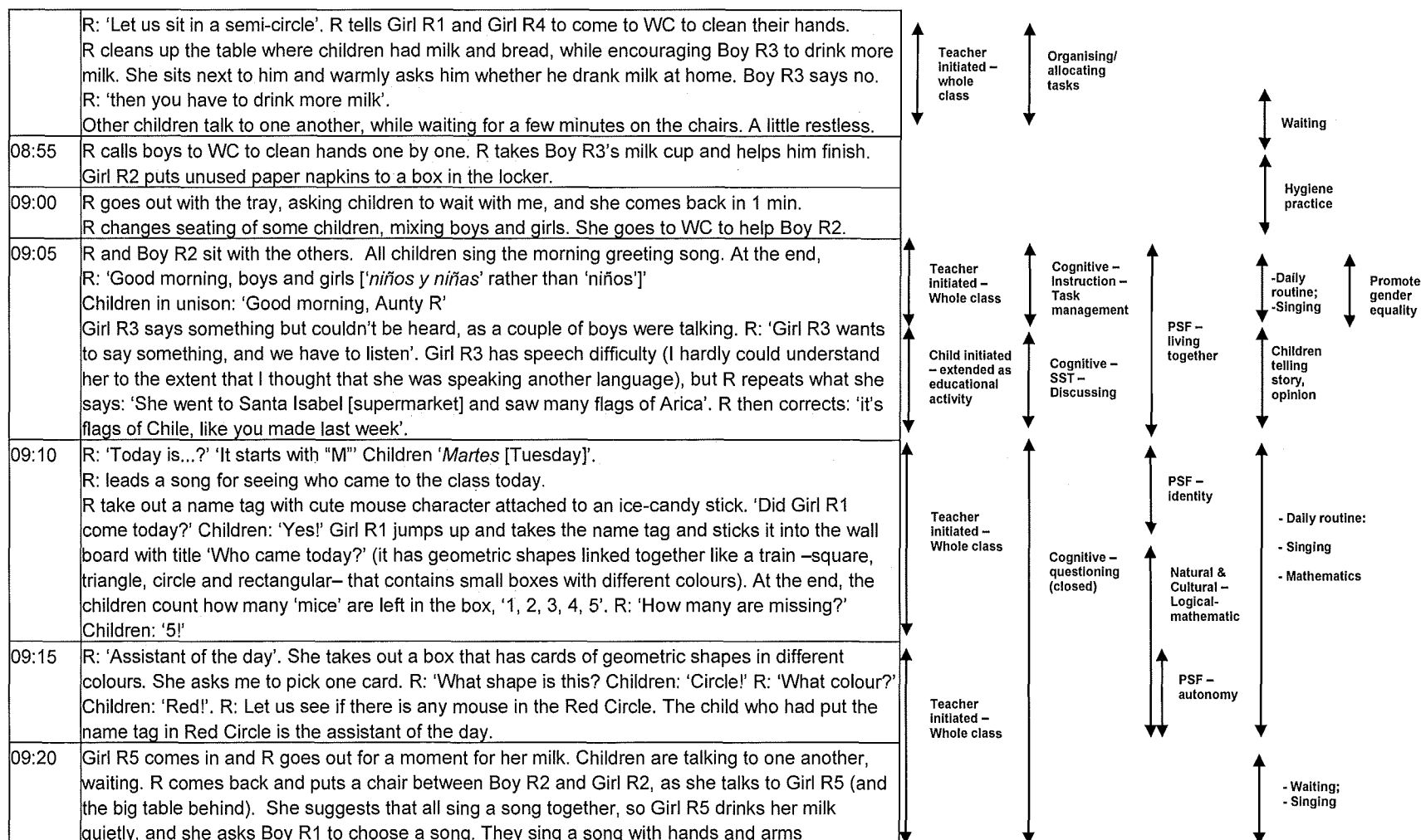
E	Literacy	5. Emergent writing/mark making	3	3	4	3	3.25
E	Literacy	6. Talking and listening	6	4	5	6	5.25
E	Mathematics	1. Counting	4	4	4	5	4.25
E	Mathematics	2. Reading and writing simple numbers	2	2	6	4	3.50
E	Mathematics	3. +Shape and space	4	2	2	4	3.00
E	Mathematics	4. +Sorting, matching and comparing	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
E	Science and Environment	1. Natural materials	1	1	1	1	1.00
E	Science and Environment	2. Science resourcing	2	1	1	2	1.50
E	Science and Environment	3. +Science processes: Non-living	2	1	2	2	1.75
E	Science and Environment	4. +Science processes: Living processes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
E	Science and Environment	5. +Science processes: Food preparation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
E	Diversity	1. Individual learning needs	1	1	1	1	1.00
E	Diversity	2. Gender equity	1	1	3	2	1.75
E	Diversity	3. Multicultural education	2	1	1	1	1.25

## Appendix 7 Coding example of observation notes

### Arica-PK: Tuesday 9 September (Irena = R)

		Activity structure	Adult pedagogic interaction	Curricular areas	Learning activity	Diversity
08:00	1 <sup>st</sup> girl arrives with mum. Irena explains to me about how the classroom is organised.					
08:05	Two more girls come in, and Irena hugs one of them, saying smilingly, 'she is a spoiled girl'. She tells girls, 'let us take out toys while waiting for the friends.' R puts on merry and soothing children's music on CD. R goes around the room, talking to the girls and arranging materials.	Teacher initiated – individual (with teachers)	Social – Care			
08:15	R sits with the girls and plays a memory game with cards (to match the drawing and the written name of a symbol/site of Chile). Boy R4 enters and play with plastic toys alone but talking to R and the other girls.		Social – social talk			
08:20	Boy R2 enters with mum, who tells R that she will come at 12:30 because she has to a meeting. R helps Boy R2 blow his nose. R asks him to bring toilet paper, helps him blow his nose again and tells him to throw the tissue to the bin. She asks Boy R2 to please put back the roll of toilet paper to where it was. Children continue playing at the big table.	Child initiated – free play	Social – Care		Hygiene practice	
08:30	R: 'the last round, because you need to take milk'. R asks girls to count the number of cards they got. She asks each girl how many and then asks, 'who won?'. Girl R1 had the most cards. R: 'Girl R1 won but we also won because we have many cards'.	Child initiated – extended to educational activity	Cognitive– STT- Playing		Games and toys	
08:40	R goes out and brings milk cups (hot milk with chocolate) and pieces of bread and distributes to each. Boy R1 is a bit shy at the sight of a stranger (me) and is glued to R. R hugs him and explains that she had explained to him last week that I was coming. R sits with children at the table and talk to them socially. One boy asks how to write a word, and she shows it on paper. Boy R3 arrives with mum, who tells R that he didn't want to come because he was sleepy. Mum quickly exchange few words with R and leaves.		-Social – Care; -Social talk		Eating/ Drinking	
08:45	Boy R1 asks why we have children's music. R says because it's the room for children and asks whether he wishes to listen to other kinds of music. Children's responses were mixed [No!/Yes!]. Boy R3 blows his nose with help of R. R encourages children to finish and those who have finished to clean up. Boy R2 keeps one piece of bread in his backpack.		Social – social talk			
08:50	Boy R1 spills milk. R takes his hands and takes him to WC [within the room] to wash his hands. Children are putting back their plate. Boy R2 helps R lift a table, and R thanks him: 'Thank you, friend'. R puts chairs in a semi circle at the corner of the room in front of a small white board (near Mathematics Corner).				Tidying up	

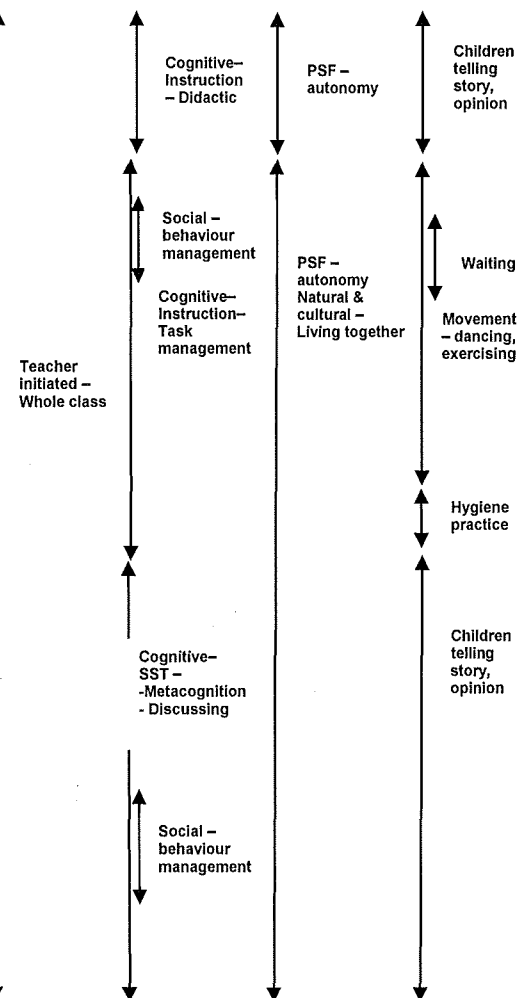


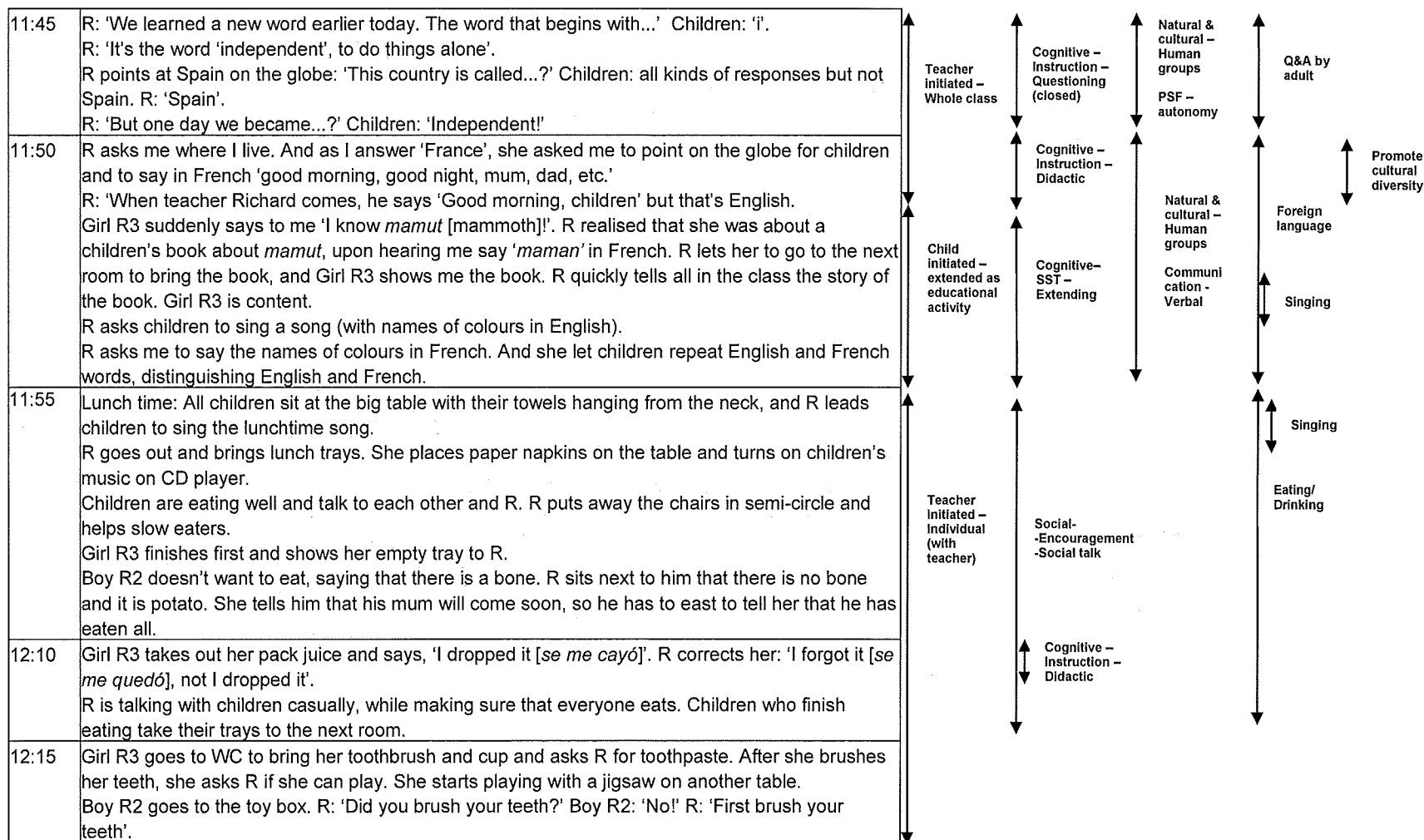




	<p>'put on clothes', 'take a bath alone'... R encourages children to speak out one by one even if their responses are repeating others'.  R: 'What is that you are doing, Girl R5?' Girl R5: 'eat alone and drink milk alone'.  R: 'Milk needs to be heated. Mum has to help you; you can stir the milk carefully, because fire is dangerous'.  Girl R1 wants to say something but doesn't come out. R waits for her (about 10 sec) and Girl R1 finally says, 'I sleep alone'.</p>	Teacher initiated – Whole class	Cognitive – SST – Discussing		Q&A by adult
09:45	<p>R introduces the activity with a worksheet: draw what is independent and colour the drawing of a clown. 'When you are done, we'll get together again in a semi circle to tell others'. After colouring, we will go to the patio to play and do activities for FP.  Children go back to the big table. R: 'who are the assistants of the day? Boy R4 and Girl R3'. Boy R4 and Girl R3 distribute the worksheets. R and children sing a song 'one sheet for you; thank you, friend'...  R puts on children's music.</p>	Teacher initiated – Whole class	Cognitive – Instruction – Describe activity		
09:50	<p>R: 'What do you do to be independent?' One boy: 'drink milk'. R: 'then draw a milk mug'.  R sits at the table, constantly reminding the task ('what makes you independent'; 'what you do by yourself'; 'it doesn't matter if it comes out badly').  After children draw, she asks what the drawings are. Eg. Boy R2: 'to drink milk alone'. R writes on the sheet: 'I can drink milk alone', so that his family understands what he drew. R gives him a name plate, so he writes his name at the bottom of the worksheet.</p>	Teacher initiated – Individual (work alone)	Cognitive – Monitoring	Natural & cultural – Human groups PSF – autonomy	-Drawing -Colouring
10:00	<p>Boy R1 says that he saw a gentleman walking without legs.  R: 'How is that he walked without legs?' And Boy R1 stands up and hops on one leg.  R: 'Ah, he was walking on one leg. One can walk with one leg, with a cane.'  R: 'Those who have finished, let us sit in a semi-circle, so we tell our friends what we did.'</p>	Child initiated – extended as educational activity	Cognitive – SST – Extending		
10:05	<p>R: 'let us start from Girl R5'. R asks each child to stand up and shows his/her drawing and tell the others what they drew. But most children are shy. R holds his/her shoulder to give security and asks, 'what can you do to be independent?'  Children are a bit restless, R starts singing softly.  R: 'Boy R2, come over here to tie your shoelace, because this shoelace is dangerous'.  Boy R3: 'to put on clothes alone [<i>ponerse la ropa</i>]. R: 'to put on clothes alone, to get dressed [<i>vestirse</i>].'  After children present their work, they go to the hall to hang their sheet on the wall with clips.  Girl R3 presents her work and says shyly, 'I no longer suck mum's breast'. R praises her clapping</p>	Teacher initiated – Whole class	Cognitive – SST – Metacognition Cognitive – Instruction – Didactic	Communication – Verbal	Children telling story, opinion

	<p>hands.</p> <p>R corrects if girls says 'solo' [alone] to feminine 'sola'.</p> <p>Boy R3 says, 'now I can do many things alone' and flaps his hand on mouth and makes sound 'wa, wa, wa'. R: 'that you could do before when you were a baby.'</p> <p>R: 'Applause for all the things that you can do alone and that you are independent!'</p>
10:15	<p>All get up go out to the patio. Children stand in 2 lines (boys / girls) and walk together, holding hands.</p> <p>In the school playground, there seems to be a school assembly (lots of children and teachers from all grades). It's a special sports event and they play tug of war. Preschool children sit and watch basic education children play (5 girls and 5 boys in each team).</p>
10:40	<p>Finally Pre-kinder and Kinder classes play and PK loses.</p> <p>R: 'It doesn't matter if we win or not. What's important is we participate and compete'</p>
10:45	<p>Then preschoolers go to the side of the playground and play various sports: potato sack jump, horse-ride imitation. First K-kids play, while PK kids wait, sitting. R goes away somewhere, and some PK kids, waiting for their turn, look bored.</p> <p>When PK class finishes, the children wait for K children to finish (they move to shade).</p>
11:20	<p>All go back to the classroom and go to WC to wash hands. R is telling them to roll up sleeves, etc. Some drink water from the faucet.</p>
11:30	<p>R and children sing a song and sit in a semi-circle.</p> <p>R: 'Girl R5, where were we just now?' Girl R5: 'Over there, outside, the big patio'.</p> <p>R: 'What did we do, Boy R4?' Girl R5: 'game with a horse'</p> <p>R: 'Boy R3?' P: 'Competition'.</p> <p>R: 'Did we care that we lost?' Children: 'No!' R: 'No, it's not important that we lost. What's important is to participate and have fun.'</p> <p>Then R asks each child which game they liked.</p>
11:35	<p>Boy R1 tickles Boy R4 in the neck and Boy R4 complains to R. R: 'how do you feel, Boy R4, when Boy R1 tickles you?' Boy R4: 'I don't like that he does it to me'. R: 'Why don't you like it? Tell it to Boy R1'.</p> <p>Boy R4 looks at Boy R1: 'because tickling bothers me'. R: 'OK, Boy R4 doesn't like it, because tickling bothers him'.</p>
11:40	<p>R goes back to the discussion about the outdoor games played. R: 'they are typical games of Chile'. Girl R5 tells a story of her going with her dad to beach and ride a horse.</p> <p>Children raise hands and tell similar stories.</p>





	After putting the toy back to the box, Boy R2 goes to WC and brings his toothbrush. There seems to be good disciplines (e.g. children go to throw away the straw cover before drinking their pack juice; R constantly remind children to sit well).	Teacher initiated – Individual (with teacher)		Hygiene practice
12:20	Boys and girls are playing together at the other table. Girl R4 is the only one left in the other big table, drinking juice. After taking care of children's tooth brushing in WC, R goes to the big table and cleans up the table.			
12:25	R informs Boy R4 that the other table is clean and they can play. She helps Girl R4 to brush teeth.			
12:30	Girl R3 throws a car out of the table. Boy R2: 'Aunty, Girl R3 threw away the toy'. R: 'What shall we say?' G: 'say no'. R: 'it's up to you. That depend on you what to say.'			
12:35	Boy R3's mum arrives to pick him up. He greets auties and other children and leaves (R tells other kids to say good-bye to 'friend'). Boy R1 working with hammer and nail (for <i>bricolage</i> ), and Girl R2 and Girl R1 join him and play bricolage. Boy R2 is playing with dinosaurs and Girl R3 knocks them down. Boy R2 says, 'hey'.	Child initiated – free play	Social- -Social talk -Behaviour management	Games and toys
12:40	R takes away trays and come back. She is piling children's work (drawings, etc.). Children greet Girl R1, who leaves with mum. Boy R2: 'Bye, friend!'			
12:50	R [to the children who are playing the memory game]: 'There are rules in a game. Remember that there are rules in a game. You turn the card and not looking'. Most children have left the class.	Child initiated – participated by teacher		

## Appendix 8 Examples of analysing the educators' pedagogical interactions

Sub-category	Interaction	Educator	Episode
SST	Discussing	Irena	Boy R1 asks why we have children's music. R says because it's a room for children asks whether he'd like to listen to other kinds of music. Another girl says she likes children's music.
SST	Discussing	Irena	Singing a song of Little Red Riding Hood. One boy asks, 'does the wolf kill other animals? I: Yes sometimes. One boy 'animas are not bad, they are cute'...they talk about animas
SST	Discussing	Irena	Girl R3 with speech problem: Girl R3 wants to say something, and we have to listen. She went to Santa Isabela and saw many flags of Arica. It's flags of Chile, like you made last week
SST	Discussing	Irena	Class discusses what 'to be independent' means. I explains and gives examples, and they discuss other examples
SST	Discussing	Irena	After story-telling, the class discusses again 'what other things can you do when you are independent?'
SST	Discussing	Irena	After outdoor exercise, I:'where were we just now? What did we do? Did we care we lost? Asks children what games they liked
SST	Discussing	Irena	Boy R1 tickles Boy R4 who complains to R. R: how do you feel, Boy R4, when Boy R1 tickles you? Discusses about feelings.
SST	Discussing	Irena	R asks where I live (France) and asks me to say words in French for children to repeat.
SST	Discussing	Irena	Before field trip, she discusses with children what they think they will see at the museum (and writes them down)
SST	Discussing	Irena	After field trip, she asks what they liked, what they found in the museum and if they saw what they had expected to see. Discusses how they behaved; where they would like to visit next
SST	Discussing	Irena	Math: 'why do we need to count'? What do we need to count
SST	Discussing	Mariana	Daily evaluation of peers. How did xx behave today?
SST	Discussing	Mariana	Who realised something new? After a brief intro, M asks children to ask me questions.
SST	Discussing	Mariana	M asks children what they remember from <i>Chinchinero</i> . After replaying video, going through the list on whiteboard to tick correct ones
SST	Discussing	Mariana	M and children had discussed the questions to ask me; some reps ask me questions
SST	Discussing	Sylvia	S and children discusses the characteristics of the cartoon image of <i>El Trauco</i> on internet
SST	Extending	Irena	After singling Little Red Riding Hood song, one boy 'does the wofl kill other animals?'...R asks children what other animals are there and they speak about diff animals
SST	Extending	Irena	Boy R1 says he saw a man walking without legs; R: How is that he walked without legs?; Boy R1: like this; R: ah, he was walking on one leg. One can walk with one leg with a cane
SST	Extending	Irena	Girl R3 suddenly 'I know <i>mamut</i> ' after hearing ' <i>maman</i> '. R realises girl was talking about the book about <i>mamut</i> and let her bring the book. R quickly tells the class about the story of the book. Girl is happy.
SST	Extending	Mariana	After <i>disertación</i> : helps the presenter ask questions (what do you want to ask your friends? Who do you want to ask?) helping her/him do it
SST	Extending	Sylvia	Sum: 'Are there other ways of doing to reach 18?' And children propose different ideas.
SST	Meta-cognition	Irena	In semi-circle, one by one children present what they have drawn (what can I do to be independent).
SST	Meta-cognition	Irena	I: where were we just now? Girl R5: over there the big patio. I: what did we do?...

SST	Meta-cognition	Irena	After field trip, I reminds children the question she asked before the trip and asks them if they found what they had expected (one by one)
SST	Meta-cognition	Irena	Outdoor exercise: children sit in a big circle and teachers lead a discussion about what they have just done: talk about a loop being 'full' or 'empty'
SST	Meta-cognition	Josefina	After PPT session 'what id we learn?' 'Are there new words?'
SST	Meta-cognition	Loreto	Self-evaluation of behaviour: how did you behave? Why?
SST	Meta-cognition	Mariana	Individually at the end of the last activity: 'what did you do? Girl M5: 'Colouring' M: and then? Girl M5: cut out and paste; M: 'for what?' Girl M5 'for what?' M: to review steps. For making a Chilean flag
SST	Meta-cognition	Mariana	Peer evaluation of behaviour: how did Boy M3 behave?, etc.
SST	Meta-cognition	Mariana	To Girl M5: what did you learn today? (no answer); M: An interesting question (to class). What did you learn today? Some children : regions of Chile
SST	Meta-cognition	Mariana	M: (to Girl M7) What are you filling? Girl: Chile. M: But what specific part? M: Region
SST	Meta-cognition	Mariana	M: What did you learn from the <i>disertación</i> de Girl M10?
SST	Meta-cognition	Mariana	After DVD, M asks what children remember. Speaks one by one
SST	Meta-cognition	Mariana	M: the worksheet that we couldn't finish yesterday. M shows children the exercise sheet and asks children what they have to do
SST	Meta-cognition	Sylvia	(Librarian) After reading the book, asks if children remember what happened in the stroy
SST	Meta-cognition	Sylvia	Sum (11 boys and 7 girls=18 children): what did you do boy S7?
SST	Meta-cognition	Sylvia	After reading a poem: what do you remember from the poem?
SST	Meta-cognition	Sylvia	Are we learning?'
SST	Meta-cognition	Sylvia	What have we done for FP? 'Kites' S: that's what you do at home but we have not done it here. S: what did we learn about our country?
SST	Modelling	Irena	During free play, one boy asks her how to write a word, and she shows it on paper
SST	Modelling	Loreto	Shows how to make a knot with a piece of dough (long strip). When a girl asks her to show, she makes a knot and unfold it to let the girl do herself
SST	Modelling	Loreto	She shows how to scoop meringue and put it on top of pajaritos; 'assistants' follow her model
SST	Modelling	Mariana	After disertación, M encourages the presenter to ask the class questions; when he/she can't, M whispers questions into presenter's ear
SST	Modelling	Mariana	During disertación, M repeats the text/sentences with correct grammar/clearer pronunciation
SST	Modelling	Mariana	M writes down 'For Aunty Mami', so children copy it.
SST	Modelling	Mariana	M is correcting Girl M8's name. M writes the correct spelling and helps F write each letter above M's writing
SST	Modelling	Olga	(pasting rolled up tissues on Chilean flag) stands behind children who have problems and show how to roll up tissues in front of children's eyes
SST	Modelling	Olga	She puts Boy O2 on her laps with her arms around his shoulders and shows him how to roll tissues and paste
SST	Modelling	Olga	(writing '2') Holds children's hands and help them write '2'
SST	Modelling	Sylvia	(making rings for a paper chain) explains why it doesn't look right and shows how to link the strip in front of the child's eyes and encourages



			him/her to continue
SST	Modelling	Sylvia	Demonstrates how to make a Chilean flag with coloured paper
SST	Playing	Irena	R sits with girls and plays a memory game with cards. She discourages competition: Girl R1 work but we also won b/c we have many cards. There are rules in the game: remember that there are rules in a game
SST	Playing	Josefina	<i>El Pollito</i> game
SST	Playing	Loreto	Pass around a teddy bear to music: when music stops, the child holding the teddy answers the questions re: FP
SST	Playing	Loreto	Children sit in a circle of chairs (one or two less than the number of children) and when music stops, they try to sit. Those who lost, will pick up their backpack and get ready for the goodbye routine
SST	Playing	Mariana	As M helps children put away the letter puzzles, she asks Boy M8 what letter it is.
SST	Playing	Mariana	<i>El Pollito</i> game
SST	Reinforcement	Olga	Boy O7 comes to look for his name plate. O: Boy O7, you know how to write your name by yourself. Boy O7 drops his name plate and goes back to table and writes down his name
SST	Reinforcement	Olga	Boy O8 brings his work to show to O. O: you have to put down your name. Boy O2: I can't write my name. One doesn't respond. Boy O8 goes back to his table and writes down his name.
SST	Reinforcement	Olga	Boy O1 goes to O asking 'what colours does the flag have?' O: you know what colours the flag has. Boy O1 goes back to his seat and colours flag.
SST	Scaffolding	Irena	R asks Girl R5 to count the number of remaining name tags but Girl R5 has difficulty. R: shall we help Girl R5? Girl 5 counts with others (R right next to Girl R5). Girl R5 counts again alone successfully. R: you see that you can do it well.
SST	Scaffolding	Sylvia	Counting number of boys. Boy S5 gets stuck. S: you lost concentration because others were talking. We do it again from the beginning. She asks other children gently but firmly to be quiet so that Boy S5 will not lose concentration. Boy S5 manages to count the boys correctly.
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Closed - Daily routine: day of the week, dates, attendance (has xx come today?)
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Closed - Pointing globe: what's here? What's this called? What's the name of the president?
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Closed - One day we became? 'Independent'
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Open - What are we going to see in the museum?
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Closed - [Aymaras] What are they called? How are they dressed, etc.?
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Open - Did we see what we expected to see at the museum? Did we see clothes from street? Toys? What other things?
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Open - (children's drawings) ask each child to tell others what they liked at the museum
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Closed - How many mice (names for attendance) are missing today?
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Closed - what shapes, what colour (for attendance)?
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Open - Why do we need to count? What do we need to count?
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Closed - What number is this?
Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Open - (exercise loop) What can these loops for?

Instruction	Questioning	Irena	Closed - What did Aunty Mami say the other day (good morning in French)?
Instruction	Questioning	Josefina	Closed - How do you call a gentleman who does this (gesture of a conductor)?
Instruction	Questioning	Josefina	Closed - (assistant) What the name of the song? What's the rythm of the song?
Instruction	Questioning	Josefina	Closed - what's the name of the country? Where is Chile located?
Instruction	Questioning	Josefina	Closed - Do potatoes grow above or beneath the earth? How do you call the man who dedicates to herding?
Instruction	Questioning	Josefina	Closed - (PPT) what's the name of the indigenous group? In what part of Chile do they live, etc.?
Instruction	Questioning	Josefina	Closed - (Picture cards same as PPT) what is it? How do you call this (waiting for the word 'weaving')
Instruction	Questioning	Josefina	Open - What did we learn? Are there any new words?
Instruction	Questioning	Josefina	Closed - Sum: What sign do we need to put between 5 and 2? How can I sum?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - Daily routine: day of the week, dates, attendance (has xx come today?), weather
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - Who has eaten <i>pajaritos</i> ? Have you seen making <i>pajaritos</i> ?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Open - why do you think we have to sift the flour?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - how many eggs? What gives eggs? What do we need now (sugar)?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - How do you call this thing I'm using? 'Spoon!' No, not that. 'Grater' Very good.
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - What's the name of the baby of a cow?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - How do you call this movement (kneading)?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - This is a product of what (recipe)? Where can we copy the recipe (notebook)?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - quiz/test: what's the name of the country where we live? What's the name of our national dance? etc.
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - If I eat a lot of pajaritos, is it good or bad? What happens if you have a lot of sugar?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - With what syllable does 'pajarito' begin/end?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Open - What other words start with 'pa'?
Instruction	Questioning	Loreto	Closed - quiz/test: what's the name of the country where we live? What's the name of our national dance? etc.
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Closed - daily routine: attendance (did xx come?) What's the colour of this table? How do you say it in English? Day of the week, dates, weather
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Closed - If you roll [paper] up like this, what shape does it become (round)?
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Open - Who realised something new in the classroom?
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Closed - What colour is this? What is the name of the region where we live?
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Open - Where do huemul and condors live? What do they eat? Where do you find a copihue?

Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Closed - ( <i>disertación</i> ) what is this?
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Open - (DVD) What can you remember? What are these (showing photos)?
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Closed - How many <i>chichineros</i> are here?
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Closed - ( <i>disertación</i> ) What is this (flag)? Etc.
Instruction	Questioning	Mariana	Closed - <i>Cueca</i> is our...?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - daily routine: day of the week, dates,
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - Which number did you get? Which number is it?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - Riddle: what is ...?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - On FP, we eat an (empanada)? They dance ( <i>cueca</i> )? What colours does the Chilean flag have? What's 'white' in English?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - what do we celebrate in September? What colours are there [in the flag]?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - Boy O2, what is it? How is it called?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - (English teacher): What is this? What colour is the car? Etc.
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - Tomorrow we eat empanadas, what do you want to eat, cheese or <i>pino</i> ?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - Attendance (after she counted the number of children present), how many are missing?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Closed - What's the name of this flower ( <i>copihue</i> )? And it's the flower of (Chile)? What is this animal ( <i>hulmué</i> )?
Instruction	Questioning	Olga	Open: What are our national symbols?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - daily routine: day of the week, date, weather
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Open - How do we celebrate FP?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - Mum prepares---[ <i>empanada de pino</i> ], we raise the <i>bandela</i> ...[Chilena]
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Open - (Librarian) Imagine how the zebra can recuperate his stripes he's lost.
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - How many boys/girls have come? How many are there in total?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Open - How do we know that it's a Chilean flag (and not US/Ecuador)? No answer and she responds
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - When there is no name of author, we call ... (anonymous)?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - what is the red colour of the flag compared to? Who knows what ' <i>flamear</i> ' means?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - In the north it's what? Opposite of cold?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - How do you call the people who live in our country/the famous island/those who live on Easter Island?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - why are condor and <i>hulmué</i> on Chilean national emblem? Ask your parents to look up on your computer, go to library...

Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - [pointing the letter on the board] The name of this letter is ... (m)? The name of this letter is ... (p)?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - how many vowels are in ' <i>pato</i> '. Which vowels are there?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - how do you call the ocean/mountains/lower part down south? Is it hot or cold in the north?, etc
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - what are the names of the legends we learned?
Instruction	Questioning	Sylvia	Closed - What is a legend?

Appendix 9 Example of an analytical grid used for the responses to open-ended survey questions

Respondent	What challenges in working with diversity of children? [my translation]	All children achieve learning / develop capacities and skills	Personalised attention / curricular adjustment / inclusion/integration of all children to school/community/society	Respect / celebrate diversity (both students and educators)	Gain family support/participation	Emotional and social development (self-esteem, etc.)	Giving adequate / individualised attention to children with SEN	External factors (e.g. family problems) that affect concentration and motivation	Specific cognitive/academic skills (language)	Articulation with other levels	Attend parents' needs and expectations	Lack of resources (space, materials, etc.)
10113	That all students achieve quality learning outcomes; Efficient attention, so that all students should develop their capacities and skills.	1										
10114	That all boys and girls learn according to their different learning rhythms.	1										
10115	That children have the possibility to have direct contact with their peers, who belong to other social, ethnic and cultural groups. The important thing is to favour what is natural and valuable to different but also similar, and discover while having certain different characteristics, features, customs, experiences, knowledge and thoughts, they have also other things that are common.		1									
10116	That all can learn, be integrated, participate and receive quality education equal to all other peers.	1										
10122	To help them in specific ways. All young children are accepted and differences are valued.		1	1								
10125	Equitable work and integration in cognitive as well as emotional and social area.			1		1						
20311	In the first place, to assume that we work with all kinds of boys and girls: to achieve with them quality learning outcomes that allow them to continue further studies. To respect their individual differences and learning rhythms, applying differentiated assessment when appropriate according to our internal evaluation norm.	1	1	1								
20421	The biggest challenge is to achieve that all our students, within this diversity, acquire the expected learning outcomes for the level.	1										
20511	To incorporate without discrimination all children, above all a all those who are vulnerable to the education system, by reducing school dropout, because this is a lot in this district.			1								
20521	Our challenges are as follows: to attend differences respect to learning rhythms, lack of family help, behavioural changes and above all external factors that affect [children's] lack of attention and interest in school.	1			1			1				
20611	To accept all students, respecting them so they stay in the education system. To have all boys and girls learn within the diversity. To involve all parents and guardians in the educational process of their children.	1		1	1							
20711	To achieve their full integration in the community.			1								
20821	To learn from one another good things, and to change other things if they realise; or otherwise, through activities and following others' examples.											
20921	To build a multidisciplinary working team that supports the educational needs of children, with a view to helping the teachers in their respective classrooms. To provide support to students in a specialised way, focussed on their individual needs. To make families primordial entity in the education of their children through workshops.			1	1							
21111	To achieve significant learning outcomes, regardless of their social vulnerability and risks, emphasising as our main line of action the strengthening of the language and giving emphasis on the improving the reading-writing with classroom support of CRA, ENLACES y Aula de Recursos.	1							1			

21121	That boys and girls learn more and better, To carry out diverse daily activities with children, attending the educational needs they show, by making curricular adjustments supported by the professionals from the Integration Project. To formulate a Articulation Project with other levels of the school. To foster learning trips outside school. To build positive self-esteem in boys and girls.	1			1		1				1		
21211	That all young children get to develop different abilities, skills and hence capacities, achieving significant learning outcomes.	1											
21221	To try so that children in an early level can perform according the level	1											
21311	We do curricular adjustments and differentiated assessment in the classroom and pedagogical support session in the resource room with specialised teacher. Formation of values and attitudes with their peers. Meetings with guardians of girls with SEN.						1	1					
21411	To carry out the work in the way that all can learn, regardless of their differences, by respecting personal and cultural characteristics.	1	1										
22121	Different styles and rhythms of learning. To make all children learn in an environment of trust, mutual respect and happiness. To attend the guardians' needs and expectations, respecting their own characteristics.	1										1	
22411	To reach all students. That they all learn. That they appreciate and apply the values of respect, punctuality, responsibility and solidarity.	1	1										
22421	To achieve the precise understanding of the phenomenon by the educators; and above all the respect for diversity, accepting what is distinctive as cultural upbringing from home. That they respect certain family codes of upbringing, so as not to lose cultural traditions, and accepting cultural difference as an element of the construction of society.		1										
22521	The challenge is to develop values among children in accordance with our Carisma Vicentino and that they grow up as integral human beings, developing and enhancing the cognitive skills and learning.	1					1						
22611	To incorporate them into the system, according to their needs and interests. For our school, each child enrolled deserves good attention.			1									
22821	Adaptation of the curriculum to different rhythms of learning. Individualised attention and stimulation in necessary cases (children with attention deficit, hyperactivity, lack of immaturity, language problems).	1						1					
23111	To integrate through projects and activities.			1									
23221	The challenge, as mentioned earlier, is to frame the learning experiences provided, reaching at the emotional, because in many cases, a factor with real importance to achieve our objectives is the affective environment developed in the classroom.						1						
23321	The challenge is to integrate and accept everyone equally but students in general have not presented problems in accepting them. Discrimination does not exist [in classroom].			1									
23711	As cross-cutting as B CEP. Challenge: integrated children, insufficient support. Educators are not trained in mental deficiency especially.							1					
23911	Respecting ethnic diversities and their customs. Boys and girls and their priorities in school. To take into consideration the school's mission, values of respect, tolerance and solidarity.		1										
23921	To make all children have the same possibility of development.	1											
24011	In our school's misión, respect for diversity is declared. Thus its development is always implicit in the development of all contents. It is a right, to respect and value a human being.		1										
24011	We work only with girls, respecting the diversity mentioned in the point 3.1.		1										
24211	To integrate boys and girls as well as their families in the School Education Project. To reinforce and provide techniques to parents.			1		1							
24221	We strive to improve oral and written language in these two levels and throughout the basic education.										1		

24721	The first challenge is to recognise the problems that come from home, which is not always well structured. The same happens in our consumerist society: one often does not find social preoccupation or consciousness for the difficulties that exist in education. Everyone thinks only how to maximise utilities, without any thinking for the mentality of our boys and girls. In the second place, to educate children who show learning difficulties, attention deficit and sometimes hyperactivity. In the third place, not to have ideal educational space and teaching materials that they deserve, in order to offer equitable and quality education. The above implies the increase of human and material resources, which generally do not exist.							1	1				1
24811	Big challenges, because we are an open school, which means that we do not select our children. We are only guided by age regulation.												
24921	-1 (missing)												
25111	Personalised attention (in learning areas). Sending [children] to specialists (psycho-pedagogy, neurology, phono-audiology). Criteria assessment (progress according to oneself). Integral education.				1			1					
25121	To offer our students the best development opportunities, fostering their self-esteem and allowing them to become the protagonist of their learning process. To foster self-esteem, allowing individual progress according to the rhythm of each student. Starting from individual differences, to achieve pertinent learning outcomes.	1					1						
30211	To integrate them actively in the work with their peers and prepare them for life, so that they can act and develop as integral persons.					1	1						
30221	Personalised attention, conversation with their parents and guardians, concrete pedagogical support. That all children learn and achieve the objectives proposed for the year.	1			1	1							
30821	The challenge is for all children to learn regardless of the existing diversity, by promoting, respecting and disseminating their culture of origin.	1	1										
31221	To work for diversity, with a very large group, attending and respecting individual needs that require the mentioned diversity in the classroom. Parents who do not live up to the continuous commitment to their children's learning.		1		1	1							
31721	As a challenge we have: to promote and bring about qualitative and real integration of all boys and girls in our school.			1									
32221	To provide them more personalised education.				1								
32611	To plan [activities] considering that the class is diverse, therefore, the class should have motivating, participatory activities, which are both group and individual. To give time and differentiated attention in the same way done in assessments.				1								
32621	To support and enhance the development of children with SEN, with orientations by specialists of the school.							1					
33011	To give everybody the same possibilities.			1									
33211	To attend the diversity in the best way, ensuring learning outcomes, in spite of the socioeconomic and cultural diversity that exists among our students.	1											
Total counts		21	11	11	8	7	7	6	2	2	1	1	1